Yukon Women in Apprenticeship and Trades

Prepared for:
Advanced Education Branch, Yukon Department of Education
And the Yukon Women's Directorate
Government of Yukon

Kirsten Madsen
Northern Research Institute

May 1999

Table of Contents

LIST OF FIGURES 4

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 5

INTRODUCTION 6

HIGHLIGHTS 7

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS 9

METHODOLOGY 13

WOMEN IN TRADES - STATISTICS FROM THE YUKON AND ACROSS CANADA 15

RESULTS 20
- Focus Groups - Yukon Women In Trades 20
- A Description of The Women Who Participated In The Survey 21
- The 'Men's' Survey: Instructors, Employers, Industry And Union 23

SITUATION OF YUKON WOMEN IN TRADES 24
- ENTERING TRADES 24
- WORK ENVIRONMENT 26
- THE YUKON SITUATION 27
- PHYSICAL STRENGTH 27
- OTHER ASPECTS OF TRADES PROGRAMS OR JOBS 28
- BALANCING HOME AND WORK 29
- SOURCES OF SUPPORT 29
- CONCERNS 30
- THE DRAWBACKS TO WORKING IN TRADES 31
- THE BENEFITS OF WORKING IN TRADES 32

BARRIERS 33
- BARRIERS TO ENTERING TRADES 33
- BARRIERS EXPERIENCED WHILE WORKING IN TRADES 37
- DIFFERENT SECTORS IN TRADES 37
- WOMEN IN TRADES - THE MEN'S PERSPECTIVE 38
- ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT WOMEN IN TRADES 39
- FIRST NATIONS AND TRADES 40

RECOMMENDATIONS 41
- **Improve and Increase Education** 42
- **Teach Women the 'Survival Skills' They Need to Work in a Non-traditional Environment** 43
- **Increase Family Support** 44
- **Combat Negative Socialization** 45
- **Increase Promotion** 46
- **Provide Programs for Women** 46
- **Improve and Add to Existing Training Programs** 48
  - Offer women-only training 48
  - Offer training that meets the needs of women 48
  - Make classrooms gender-sensitive 49
- **Improve and Add to Existing Government Programs** 50
- **Make Changes to the Trades Workplace** 51
  - Consider 'Bridging Programs' 52
  - Increase Workplace Supports for Women 52
  - Ensure that Workplaces are Safe and Comfortable for Women 53
  - Provide Women with Mentors 53
- **Provide Supports for Women in Trades** 54

Create Women's Networks 54
Increase Financial Support for Women in Trades 55

SITUATION OF YOUNG WOMEN IN HIGH SCHOOL TRADES CLASSES 56

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INCREASING THE PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG WOMEN IN TRADES 58
Combat Systemic Exclusion 58
Expand Career Role Models 59
Girls-only Trades Classes 60
Offer Programs for Young Women 61

CONCLUSION 62

SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH 63

REFERENCES CITED 64

REFERENCES CONSULTED 67

APPENDIX A
YUKON WOMEN IN TRADES SURVEY

APPENDIX B
YUKON WOMEN IN TRADES SURVEY - 'MEN'S SURVEY': INSTRUCTORS, EMPLOYERS, INDUSTRY AND UNION

List of Figures

Figure 1. Women's Representation in Trades: Trades, Transport and Equipment	16
Figure 2. Women's Representation in Trades: Occupations Unique to Primary Industry	16
Figure 3. Women in Trades at Yukon College	17
Figure 4. Women's Representation Among Those with Trade Certificates	18
Figure 5. Trade of Women Survey Respondents	21
Figure 6. Trades Training of Women Survey Respondents	22
Figure 7. Women's Reasons for Entering Trades	24
Figure 8. How Respondents Heard about Trades Opportunities	25
Figure 9. Influences on Respondents' Decision to Pursue Trades	25
Figure 10. Aspects of Trades: Respondents Rate Appropriateness to Women	28
Figure 11. Respondents' Sources of Support	29
Figure 12. Women's Concerns When Entering Trades	30
Figure 13. Drawbacks to Working in Trades	31
Figure 14. Benefits of Working in Trades	32
Figure 15. Why Women Don't Pursue Trades Careers	34
Figure 16. Barriers Facing Women Considering Trades	34
Figure 17. How Business or Organizations Recruit Trades Employees	36
Figure 18. Comparison: Carpentry and Other Trades	38
Figure 19. How to Make Trades More Attractive to Women	41
Figure 20. Men: How to Make Trades More Attractive/ Manageable for Women	42
Figure 21. Is Recruitment/ Promotion for Women Sufficient?	46
Figure 22. Which Programs Would Help Bring Women Into Trades?	47
Figure 23. Men: Most Important Criteria in Trades Employee Selection Process	52
Figure 24. Women in Trades: What Supports Would be Helpful	54

Acknowledgements

The researcher would like to thank the following people who contributed their knowledge, experience, and thoughtful suggestions to the development of this report.

Carolyn Moore - *Yukon Women's Directorate, YTG*
Elda Ward - *Yukon Women's Directorate, YTG*
Carol Leef - *Advanced Education, YTG*
Brent Slobodin - *Advanced Education, YTG*
Dave Nugent - *Chair, Trades and Technology, Yukon College*
Valerie Aubichon - *Administrative Assistant, Trades and Technology, Yukon College*
Miranda Atwood - *Campus Coordinator, Faro Campus, Yukon College*
Marcia Jordan - *Admin. Assistant, Dawson Campus, Yukon College*
Kim Diamond - *Health Studies Instructor, Yukon College*
Brenda Smichura-Jerome - *Survey Administrator*
Wayne Jones - *Superintendent, Curriculum, Education, YTG*
Lydia Matthies - *Training Support Officer, YTG*
Norm Ingram - *Sr. Industrial Training Consultant, YTG*
Bob Tate - *Industrial Training Consultant, YTG*
Vernon Beebe - *Director, Skills Canada Yukon*
Elizabeth Sebestyen - *Women in Trades and Technology, National Network*
Janet Adams - *Construction Technology for Women*
Heather Hay - *Skills Canada, North of Sixty WITT*
Anne St.Eloi - *Co-ordinator, BCIT Women in Trades*
Vera Owlchild - *Employment and Training Officer, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations*
Colleen Macza - *Aurora College Women in Trades*
Cindy Ekman - *Apprenticeship Coordinator, NAIT*
Pat Dewhirst - *Gender Equity Coordinator, B.C. Industry Training and Apprenticeship Commission*
Gordon Ellis - *Holland College, P.E.I.*
Harvey Hyde - *Apprenticeship, Office of Higher Education, Training and Adult Learning, P.E.I.*
Roma Dobrowlsky - *Social Equity Committee, St. Elias School*
Laurence DeBlanco - *Mechanics Instructor, Porter Creek Secondary School*
Mike Craigen - *Counselor and Co-op Ed Instructor, Vanier Catholic Secondary School*
Lynda Peterson - *CAPP Coordinator and Instructor, Porter Creek Secondary School*
Jami Eistetter - *CAPP and P. E. Instructor, F.H. Collins Secondary School*
Jamie Watts - *Aurora College, N.W.T.*
Brian Johnson - *Apprenticeship and Occupational Certification, G.N.W.T.*
Anne Birnie - *Employment Programs Officer, YTG*
Jeff Donnelly - *Northern Alberta Institute of Technology*
Thomas Djurfors - *Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development*
Don Birmingham - *Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development*
Peter Trant - *Director, BCIT Teacher Technology Education Program*
Maureen Long - *Coordinator, Northern Research Institute*

The researcher would especially like to thank the Yukon women who contributed their knowledge and experiences about working in trades, those who completed the survey, and particularly those who gave up their time to attend a focus group discussion.

Introduction

This report is the result of a research project undertaken by the Northern Research Institute. The Advanced Education Branch of the Yukon Department of Education and the Yukon Women's Directorate commissioned the NRI to examine the situation of Yukon women in apprenticeship and trades. The research for this report was conducted between January and May 1999.

The purpose of the project was firstly to determine the current situation of women in apprenticeship and trades in the Yukon. The researcher compiled statistical information on the participation of Yukon women in trades training and employment. To broaden the picture, information was also collected from colleges and apprenticeship departments in other Canadian jurisdictions.

The second goal of the project was to determine the pertinent issues affecting Yukon women with respect to trades education and employment. Focus groups were conducted with Yukon women to address important questions such as: What is the experience of women in trades? Do women experience barriers to participating in trades, and if so, what are they? What supports would attract and encourage more women to enter and succeed in trades? Two confidential surveys were also administered: one to Yukon women studying or working in trades, and one to educators, employers and individuals from industry and unions.

Finally, the purpose of the project was to create a series of recommendations with the intention of improving the representation of women in apprenticeship and trades in the Yukon. This was done using the information gained from the surveys and focus groups, as well as the resources available from persons and programs across the country attempting to address this issue.

The contents of this report, however, reflect only the opinions and conclusions of the researcher.

Highlights

- Women make up nearly half of the Yukon's paid labour force, but tend to be concentrated in jobs that pay them less than those of men.
- Occupations in the technical trades have high hourly wages as compared with the wages of childcare providers, waitresses and clerical workers. However, the number of women working or studying a trade in the Yukon is low: women currently make up only 3% of those registered in non-traditional trade apprenticeships, and 13% of those registered in trades programs at Yukon College.
- While the overall representation of women is small, Statistics Canada figures from the 1996 Census show that the representation of women in trades is actually slightly higher in the Yukon than in the rest of Canada. Women who listed themselves as workers in trades, transport and equipment operators in the Yukon were 7% of the total, and in Canada were 6% of the total. Women who held trades certificates were in the Yukon 10.5% of the total, and in Canada 9% of the total.
- Thirteen of the thirty-six Yukon women who participated in the Women in Trades survey were in carpentry, construction, or other woodworking occupations. The rest were in a variety of other trades including equipment operating, mining, mechanics and electrical.
- Nearly half of the women surveyed had worked in low paid 'traditional' women's jobs before moving into trades. A quarter of the women had at one time worked as a waitress.
- The average age of respondents' entry into trades was 25. Most women are likely not entering trades directly after high school.
- Forty-four percent of the women surveyed were not currently working in a trade. However, 81% of these women found their experience in trades beneficial.
- Most women surveyed found out about opportunities in trades from their friends and peers or family. Not one woman answered that she had found out about trades opportunities from a school counselor or teacher, and only 8% said they'd heard about trades through advertising or media
- Friends and peers, income needs and family were the biggest influences on respondents' decision to pursue trades.
- Thirty-six percent of women surveyed felt that employers had a poor attitude towards hiring women. Forty-two percent said that employers' attitude towards hiring female trades people was good.
- Half of the women surveyed said that men in their program or trade are uncomfortable with the presence of female co-workers. However, many women also stated that men became more comfortable as their exposure increased.
- Sixty-four percent of women surveyed felt that the situation of women in trades was different in the Yukon than the rest of Canada. Three quarters of these said that there is greater acceptance of women in trades in the Yukon.
- Over half of women surveyed had worried about their physical strength or fitness when considering trades. Seventy-eight percent of these found that

their physical capabilities were not a problem in the performance of their work.

- The most commonly expressed drawback to working in trades expressed by women in the survey was dealing with stereotypes or discrimination, and continually having to prove themselves capable of doing their jobs.
- Job satisfaction, better wages, and increased confidence were the most often cited benefits to trades work.
- Seventy-seven percent of surveyed Yukon women in trades said they were satisfied or very satisfied with their career choice.
- Seventy-five percent of women surveyed said that the benefits of studying or working in a non-traditional area outweighed the negative aspects.
- Forty-two percent of the women had experienced barriers to entering trades that they felt men did not. The most commonly expressed barrier was discrimination or sexist treatment when they moved into trades jobs.
- Of the women surveyed, 33% said the recruiting and hiring method of trades industry and employers is a barrier to women. Reasons given included sexist stereotypes held by employers, and the fact that women do not have the necessary contacts in the trades community.
- Ninety-two percent of women and 72% of men surveyed felt that women considering careers or education in trades in the Yukon face barriers that men do not. Women in trades rated discrimination, lack of role models and lack of opportunities as much higher determinants for why women don't pursue trades than did the men in trades surveyed. Twice as many men as women surveyed said that women do not enter trades because of lack of interest.
- Results of the survey showed a marked difference in the experience of women in carpentry and other woodworking trades and the experience of those women in other trades. Fifty-two percent of non-carpenters, as opposed to only 8% of carpenters, felt that the way most trade workers are hired is a barrier to women. Forty-four percent of non-carpenters, and only 13% of carpenters felt that employers have a poor attitude to hiring women.
- Half of the men in trades surveyed said that the work or classroom environment is affected by the presence of women. Most said women have a positive effect on the trades workplace.
- Thirty-nine percent of women surveyed said that supports or lack of supports affect their ability to concentrate on their work or studies and their prospects for achieving their goals. The supports most women said would be helpful were mentors, women's networks, and financial support.
- Very few young women were registered in high school trades classes in the higher grades. The young women in high school trades classes who attended the focus groups said that some girls just aren't interested in trades, but that often girls are not encouraged by parents, teachers and peers to take trades.
- Family support was clearly key to the decision made by these young women to register in trades classes.
- Many people pointed out that the trades have a poor image with both young men and women. The young women in the school focus groups described the additional pressures they faced.

Summary of Recommendations

Women in Trades:

- Improve and increase education:

Nearly everyone who participated in the surveys and focus groups felt that more education is needed to promote trades to women. While young women today are entering university in greater numbers than ever, and have overcome many educational barriers, most are still not widening their options to include trades. Young women are unlikely to consider trades, it seems, unless they have a strong family influence in that area, take a shop class, see female role models in trades, or they get some kind of 'hands-on' experience that shows them they can succeed in this 'non-traditional' career.

Education and incentives are needed not only to encourage young women to broaden their options but also to encourage women in later stages of life, who may be dissatisfied with their jobs or re-entering the labour force. Working women who have problems in the areas of job satisfaction, mobility, and economic return should consider non-traditional occupations. Yet women such as this are often unaware of nontraditional job opportunities or are wary of working in predominantly male settings. The challenge for educators and program recruiters is to help women overcome this ideological barrier so that they will consider non-traditional careers.

- Teach women in trades 'survival skills':

The Yukon women in trades who participated in focus groups had many words of advice for women on how to succeed in trades. Women entering trades need task-specific information about they job they are undertaking, but they also need information about the work culture to help them fit in. Many 'Women in Trades' courses include assertiveness or life-skills training to help women learn to deal with negative stereotypes or communication issues in the workplace.

- Increase family support:

Many of the women in trades who participated in the survey reported their families as a source of knowledge about trades and influence on their decision to pursue these careers. It is clearly important to educate parents to provide a supportive environment for children who pursue non-traditional career choices. Many parents wish their children to go to college or university. However, the majority of high school students do not end up at a university. Parents must be made aware of the opportunities for job satisfaction and financial security offered by the skilled trades.

- Combat negative socialization:

It is important to recognize that the messages we give young people about their abilities and attitudes affects their future opportunities. Even in a society that has come a long way towards gender equality, young women are socialized differently than their male counterparts. The work of gender equity committees in Yukon schools and the continuing education of teachers and parents with respect to giving young women encouragement, options, and

opportunities, will help affect positive change in the areas of confidence and success.

- Increase promotion:

Recruitment of women into trades employment or education needs to go beyond generalized recruiting and advertising. Employers and programmers need to make clear on their postings that positions and programs are open to women. They need to use 'outreach recruiting' methods to contact women, by advertising at women's centres, community groups and in places where their 'target group' is to be found. Catalogues and pamphlets should mention any special services offered for women, including career and personal counseling, or childcare and transportation services.

- Provide programs for women:

The challenge for policy makers is to create programs and supports to enable women to move into trades while at the same time avoiding setting up perceptions of 'special treatment' that may harm women who come after.

- Improve and add to existing training programs:

  - Offer women-only training

  Special initiative programs for women have been successfully run at many colleges in Canada. These 'Women in Trades and Technology', or 'WITT' courses take career exploration a step further for women who are interested in trades occupations but don't know where to start looking. They focus on labour market trends and employment opportunities in trades and technology. Theory and practical expertise in a variety of trades and technical areas is combined with classroom components on developing occupational fitness and safe work practices. Such courses are for women only, and often include tours of work sites and films and discussions with women who have entered these occupations and dealt effectively with any barriers encountered.

  - Offer training that meets the needs of women

  Simply making trades training programs open to women is not sufficient to make such programs truly accessible to many women. Some women need support for tuition, transportation and child care. They may need programs that include support services and a range of scheduling choices. Women may also have different learning needs, because of systemic exclusion from pre-course hands-on experience. Trades instructors must adapt to variations in learning styles.

  - Make classrooms gender-sensitive

  Existing training programs in schools and colleges can be improved through awareness or changes that make them more comfortable for students of both genders. College and training programs can act as 'insulators' against negative hiring and employment practices by intensifying awareness and by planning strategies to combat them. Trades faculty should be aware of the issues affecting the success of their female students. Educational institutions can offer special services, such as mentoring, tours of workplaces, and supportive counseling, which make the transition from school to work easier for their female graduates.

- Improve and add to existing government programs:

Until governments ensure that women have access to appropriate skills training for ongoing and emerging trades occupations, and equitable access to

those jobs, Yukon women's opportunities for economic sustainability will be limited. Training programs can run in association with a sponsoring employer or industry who is willing to offer work opportunities for female graduates. In many cases, female graduates may need help with job placement, and partnerships with the private sector can help with this. Governments can offer employers incentives to undertake employer-based training for women. Governments can also work in partnership with community groups or First Nations to offer training opportunities in communities. Currently, YTG's Apprenticeship training department does not keep lists of employers willing to take on an apprentice. Perhaps this would be a good service. A list of employers willing to take on a female apprentice would be particularly helpful.

- Make changes to the trades workplace:

  - Consider 'Bridging Programs'
  Bridging programs are programs that offer internal job opportunities to move women from stereotypical work to trades work within the same company. Bridging programs can also work to move women from home to the workplace.

  - Increase workplace support for women
  Many women have family and home demands that require as much commitment and planning as their work for pay. Supports such as workplace flexibility and child care, or other alternative work arrangements, could help to make trades work manageable for women.

  - Ensure that workplaces are safe and comfortable for women
  Workplace safety can be increased by having tools and equipment designed for use by women. Employers should also ensure that there are adequate washroom and shower facilities for women in the workplace. Other necessary workplace supports for women in trades include a workplace 'code of conduct' and explicitly stated harassment policies. Employers can make the transition of women into the trades workplace easier by preparing existing workers for the arrival of women workers. Education and awareness training of male workers alleviates their concerns and aids in the acceptance of women in the workplace.

  - Provide women with mentors
  Isolation can be a problem for women in a predominantly male environment. Employers can counteract this problem by providing women with an job-site 'buddy' system, where new women employees are paired with another woman worker or an experienced worker on the job-site whose attitude towards women is positive.

- Provide supports for women in trades:

Supports for women in trades can include mentors, women's networks, childcare, tutoring, or financial support. Many women who participated in the survey said that supports or lack of supports affect their ability to concentrate on their work or studies and their prospects for achieving their goals.

- Create women's networks:

The Yukon is the only territory or province in Canada that does not have a Women in Trades and Technology (WITT) group. WITT is a national and local

education and advocacy organization that is dedicated to promoting and assisting in the recruitment, training and retention of women in skilled trades work. The government could facilitate the creation of a WITT group in the Yukon by sponsoring Yukon trades women to attend national WITT conferences, inviting a WITT spokesperson to the Yukon to help local women organize, or providing financial support to a local organizer.

- Increase financial support for women in trades:

The availability of financial aid for trades training can provide crucial support to women who may not otherwise take the risk of exploring a non-traditional career. In other jurisdictions, special trades training programs have been offered as a service to women on social assistance, as a way of helping them achieve economic independence.

Young Women in Trades:

- Combat systemic exclusion:

Many trades instructors expressed concern that young women are systemically excluded from 'hands-on' knowledge of the materials and machines around them as they grow up. Unlike little boys, girls may not be encouraged to work with tools or machinery, or to build things and take them apart. Young women are aware of many of the stereotypes they face. While they feel things are easier for them than for women in previous generations, they can see the effects of sexism in the world around them. Gender equity committees in Yukon schools can work to increase gender equity in the classroom. The high school Career and Personal Planning Program (CAPP) provides a venue for exploring skilled trades and other non-traditional careers with young women.

- Expand career role models:

Young women need to see role models in a wide variety of areas if they are to be encouraged to keep their career options open. Many young women mentioned that having a female shop teacher in their school would encourage more girls to take trades classes.

- Consider girls-only trades classes:

Several trades teachers and instructors mentioned that young women and men may have different learning styles. Girls-only classes in areas where girls have faced systemic exclusion allows them to become comfortable and confident with unfamiliar skills in a safe and positive learning environment.

- Offer programs for young women:

Programs offered outside of or in partnership with schools can offer young women a chance to try a new trades experience, increase their comfort levels in areas they may not have been previously familiar with, and change their perceptions of inadequacy or disinterest. Youth Exploring Trades and Technology or Girls Exploring Trades and Technology camps, and the Construction Technology for Women program are examples of some programs for young women.

(For detailed recommendations, please see the body of the report.)

Methodology

The information used to compile this report was gathered in several ways. Statistical information was gathered by the researcher from sources in the Yukon and across the country with the goal of painting both a local and national picture of women's representation in trades. Apprenticeship departments and colleges in the Yukon and other parts of Canada were contacted for information about the participation of women in their programs.

Research into the available literature on women in trades was undertaken. Personal telephone interviews with key interest groups (Women in Trades National Network, Construction Technology for Women, instructors of trades programs for women, Skills Canada, Gender Equity personnel from Apprenticeship Departments, etc.) were conducted by the researcher in order to gain a broad perspective on the issues pertaining to women in trades in the Yukon.

The researcher held a total of nine focus groups. Four of these were with women working in or studying a trade. Two were in Whitehorse, and the other two were in the communities of Faro and Dawson. Four focus groups were held with young women high school students taking Shop classes. Again, two of these were at Whitehorse schools, and the other two at schools in Faro and Dawson. A focus group was also held with trades instructors at Yukon College.

Two surveys were designed and distributed by the researcher. In order to reach and gather information from people working with women in trades, a survey was designed for trades instructors, shop teachers, apprenticeship supervisors, industrial training consultants, employers, industry and union representatives. This survey was administered over the phone and in written form. Thirty-seven people (thirty-six of them men) were contacted and/or given surveys, and twenty-six surveys were completed and returned, a response rate of 70 percent. Survey participants were not randomly selected, but were contacted because they were currently teaching trades classes, were members of a Trades Advisory Committee, or were thought to be a good source of information on the subject of women in trades.

The second survey was designed and distributed to Yukon women in trades: those who are currently working or studying a trade, or who have worked or studied a trade in the past. The focus of the study was on designated trades (apprenticeable) and other *non-traditional* trades such as surveying and mining. Information was gathered on *non-traditional* female trade occupations. Baker, cook, and hairdresser are designated trades, but among women are not considered non-traditional occupations. These three trades were not studied. To further clarify, the focus of the study was on trades, not technology occupations (even though these are non-traditional as well) so women working in engineering, computing or science areas were not contacted.

The researcher attempted to gather a list of women in trades in the Yukon that was as complete as possible. Most of this was done by word of mouth. In a territory with a small population, many names were repeated. Yukon College trades graduation records were also used as a source. By the end, a list of 114 women was gathered. Many of these were unreachable, but an attempt was made to contact as many women as possible. The survey administrators left an initial message for each woman not spoken to, and a follow up phone call and message was left for those who didn't return the first call. Women who were contacted or who returned the call were told about the study and invited to

attend a focus group and/or complete a survey. At final count, 54 women were contacted and/or given surveys, and 38 surveys were completed and returned, a response rate of 70 percent. These surveys were administered by phone, in written form to women who attended focus groups, and faxed, emailed and mailed to women unable to attend a focus group.

It was recognized and accepted that the nature of the survey design and administration may affect the kind of information collected. Surveys that are statistically representative are costly and time-consuming and may not yield the depth and richness of information provided by focus groups. The loss of statistical representation in interview studies is often offset by the emergence of common themes. Both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered in an effort to develop the broadest possible data base on work and training experiences in trades for women in the Yukon.

The women who participated in the survey and focus groups have worked in carpentry, mechanics, surveying, mining, electrical and a variety of other trades areas. Since the number of women in each trade is small, specific information on each trade has not been published for reasons of confidentiality. Similarly, due to the sensitive nature of some comments provided, the identity of respondents has been kept confidential.

Women in Trades - Statistics from the Yukon and across Canada

Women in the Yukon make up an increasingly large proportion of the paid labour force. There were 8, 010 female workers in the Yukon in 1996, 47.5% of the working population. The labour force participation rate is also increasing: 78.5% of women over 15 years of age were part of the Yukon's work force in 1996. However, there still remains a significant gap between the average income of women and men. While this gap is slightly smaller in the Yukon than it is in Canada, in 1995 women in the Yukon made only 79 cents for every dollar made by men (Government of Yukon Women's Directorate, 1999).

The fact is that while women make up nearly half of the labour force in the Yukon and in Canada, most of them are concentrated in some of the lowest paying jobs. In 1996, more Canadian women reported themselves as retail salespersons than any other occupation, followed by secretaries and cashiers. Women represented only 22% of all earners in the 25 highest paying occupations. About 3 of 5 people in the lowest paying occupations were women, with income ranging from $12, 662 to $19, 697 (Statistics Canada, 1998).

Women with some post-secondary education earn less, on average, than men with less than grade nine education (Government of Yukon Women's Directorate, 1999). One explanation for this is the above-mentioned 'occupational segregation.' Many 'traditionally male' occupations provide higher income returns for less education. The skilled trades are one such occupational area. While becoming a registered apprentice today requires at least a grade ten education in most trades, apprentices earn a significant income while they learn and can expect to earn above average wages upon completion of their program (Yukon Apprenticeship Pamphlet, Government of Yukon Advanced Education, N.D.).

Technical trades have high hourly wages as compared with the wages of child care providers, waitresses, and clerical workers. Five of the ten most frequent occupations for Canadian men in 1996 were jobs in the broad category of trades, transport, and equipment operators: truck drivers, motor vehicle mechanics, material handlers, carpenters and construction trade helpers. In the Yukon, 'heavy equipment operator' was the most frequently reported occupation for men (Statistics Canada, 1998).

The number of women working in trades in the Yukon and across Canada is very low, as shown by the following graphs.

Figure 1:

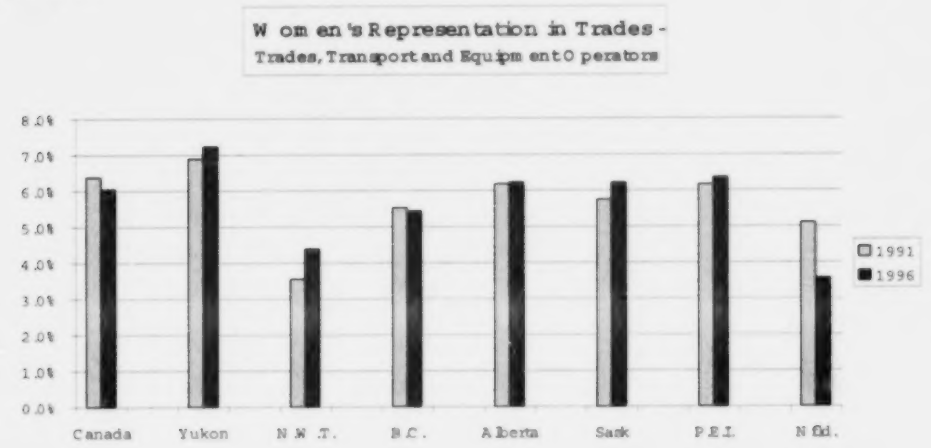
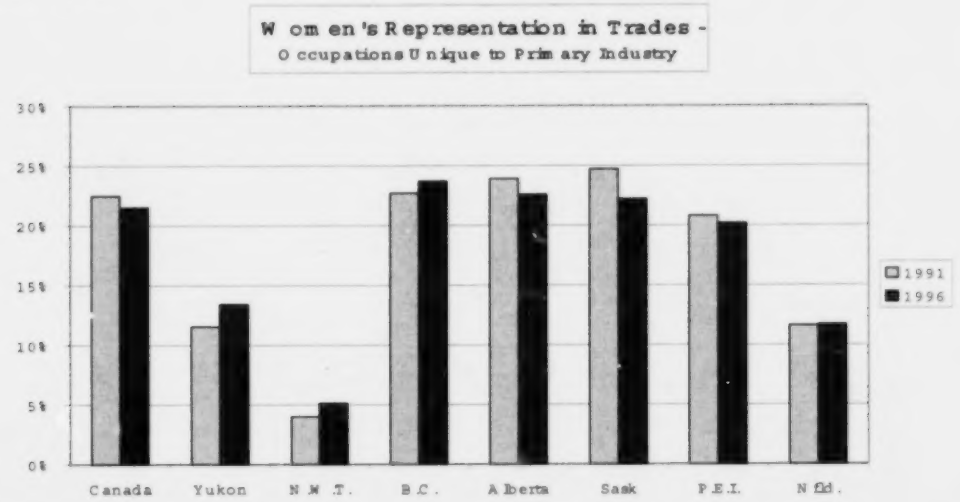


Figure 2:



(Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 1996)

Apprenticeships, which often serve as a gateway to the trades, have very low female representation across Canada. In the Yukon there are currently 17 female and 219 male apprentices. Only seven of the women are apprenticing in non-traditional trades (again, this excludes cooking, baking and hairdressing). This means the representation of Yukon women in non-traditional trades apprenticeships is only 3%. There are over 40 apprenticeable occupations in the Yukon, and women have only ever registered in 14 of these areas, and graduated with journey status from only 8 of them (Yukon Advanced Education Branch, Apprenticeship Training Report, 1999).

Yukon Women Apprentices 1980 -1999 (Non-Traditional Trades) Total 43	#	%
Women Who Completed their Apprenticeship Program	16	37%
Women Who Dropped out of Apprenticeship Program	20	47%
Women Still Registered	7	16%

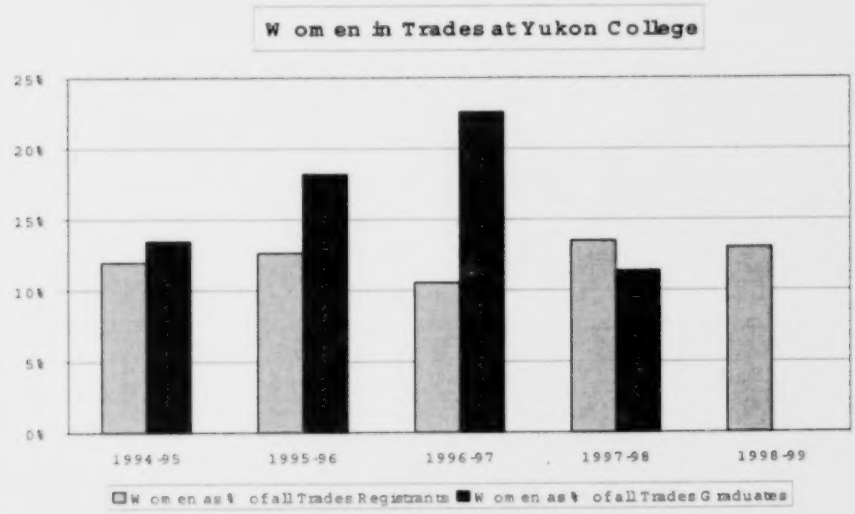
(Source: Yukon Advanced Education Branch, Apprenticeship Training Report, 1999)

The representation of women in apprenticeships in other parts of Canada is similarly low. In Alberta, 2325 women are currently apprenticing out of a total of 30,555 apprentices. The representation is about 7.5%, but when you remove the women who are in the baking, cooking or hairstyling programs, the 697 women left in non-traditional apprenticeships equals a representation of 2% (Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development, Female Participation Summary Reports, 1999).

In the N.W.T., the seven women currently in non-traditional trades apprenticeships represent about 2% of a total 383 apprentices (Brian Johnson, Apprenticeship and Occupational Certification, G.N.W.T., Personal Communication). In P.E.I., there are two female apprentices in non-traditional trades, representing less than one percent of the 325 total apprentices (Harvey Hyde, P.E.I. Office of Higher Education, Training and Adult Learning, Personal Communication). There are about 9000 female apprentices in B.C., about 6% of the total apprentices. Excluding the women in traditional apprenticeship trades like baking and hairdressing, the representation is around 4% (Pat Dewhirst, B.C. Industry Training and Apprenticeship Commission, Personal Communication).

The representation of women in trades programs at colleges across the country is little better. The following graph shows the enrollment and graduation rates of women at Yukon College in the past five years.

Figure 3:



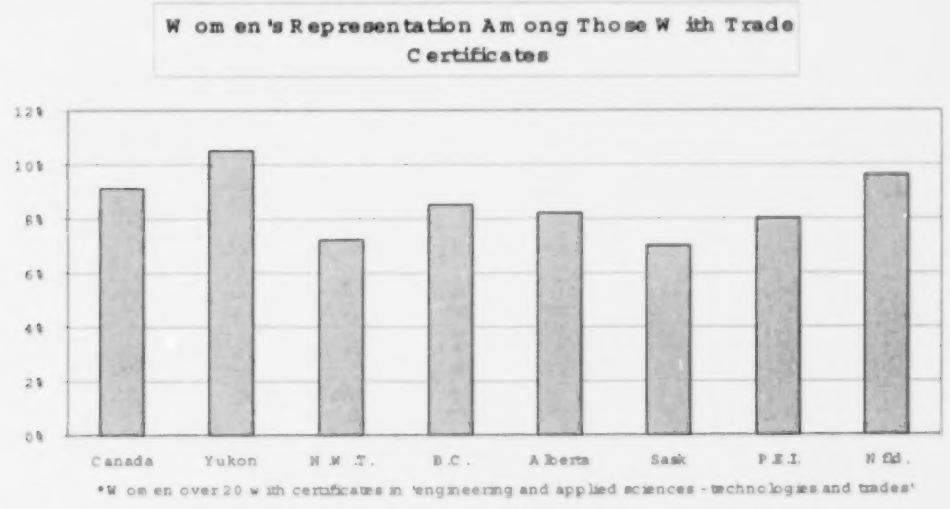
(Source: Yukon College Registrar, 1999)

Though the representation of women in trades programs at Yukon College is low, we can see that the graduation rates are comparatively higher than the registration rates. This shows that many women who do enroll are sticking with their program and graduating. Women have tended to enroll in certain programs more than others, these being surveying, mine training, and carpentry. The numbers in electrical and mechanics are lower, and no woman has ever enrolled in heavy equipment mechanics at Yukon College. The enrollment of women in trades programs at colleges across the country is similarly low. At the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, women currently make up 7% of the enrollment in their one-year trades certificate programs (Jeff Donelly, N.A.I.T. Registrar's Office, Personal Communication), and about 3% of enrollment in apprenticeship courses (Cindy Ekman, N.A.I.T. Apprenticeship Coordinator, Personal Communication). At Holland College, in P.E.I., there are currently 2 women out of 109 people in non-traditional trades programs, a representation of less than 2% (Gordon Ellis, Holland College Registrar's Office, Personal Communication).

The enrollment of women at colleges with specific 'Women in Trades' programs is slightly better. Aurora College, in the N.W.T., had a 6% representation of women in non-traditional trades programs in 1995. Their 'Women in Trades' program started in 1996, and the representation of women is currently 12% (Aurora College Registrar, 1999). At the British Columbia Institute of Technology, the enrollment of women was less than 3%, and completion rates were poor prior to 1995, when the 'Women in Trades' program started. Currently, the enrollment rate is up to around 11%, and more women complete their pre-employment courses (Anne St.Eloi, Coordinator, B.C.I.T. Women in Trades Program, Personal Communication).

The following graph gives a national picture of the representation of women among those who hold trade certificates.

Figure 4:



(*Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 1996)

It is interesting to note that, according to several of the above statistics, the Yukon is actually slightly better than the rest of the country in terms of the representation of women in trades. However, the statistics in this

section show that occupational segregation still exists in the Yukon and across Canada. They show that women are not participating in trades programs or jobs in significant numbers. Statistics don't, however, offer much information about the experiences of the women who do choose to work in jobs that are not traditional for women, such as trades. The research that went into this report is a step towards the goal of learning more about the experiences of Yukon women in trades, and how we can learn from these experiences with the aim of making trades more accessible to Yukon women. While many women would benefit from working at a job that pays an adequate wage, this report shows that the possible gains for women who consider trades careers go far beyond the financial.

Results

Focus Groups - Yukon Women in Trades

Four focus groups were held with women in trades: two in Whitehorse, and two in the communities. Twenty-three women attended the focus groups. They came in their free time to share their experiences of studying or working in a trade and to give recommendations for making trades more accessible or manageable for women.

In general, the women who attended the focus groups were strong, outspoken individuals. They had worked very hard and were proud of their successes in trades. Most of them found that they were able, with hard work and perseverance, to forge successful careers in trades in the Yukon. Many of them had been interested in trades from a young age, usually because they were exposed to it through their families. Others went into trades after other careers, usually because of perceived greater financial opportunity.

" I can't type. I don't have those skills, and I'm not an academic. I didn't really know what was out there. I bought a house, a fixer, that started it. Things needed to be done - electrical and drywall - and my brothers came and helped me, and my dad. I took a couple of construction courses, to learn the basics. I didn't know what a stud was, other than a cowboy."

" Basically, I hung around with my brothers, and was more interested in what they did, I guess, at a young age. Then out of high school I went to university. I'm not an office type, or secretary. If there was work, it was for 8 or 9 dollars an hour, which I wasn't willing to do. So I thought I'd go back to school. I'm taking a trade."

" I'm in my 40's now, and barely a day's gone by when I don't have a tool in my hand. You're just addicted to it. I couldn't go back to the same office job, day in and day out, sitting in a chair. And you can travel

" I decided to study the trades program because I had no experience working with my hands and I missed that. I wanted to feel more capable I guess. My intention was never to join the trade, but I have to admit, three quarters of the way through the year, I thought, geez, I could do this. Because it's fun, I love it."

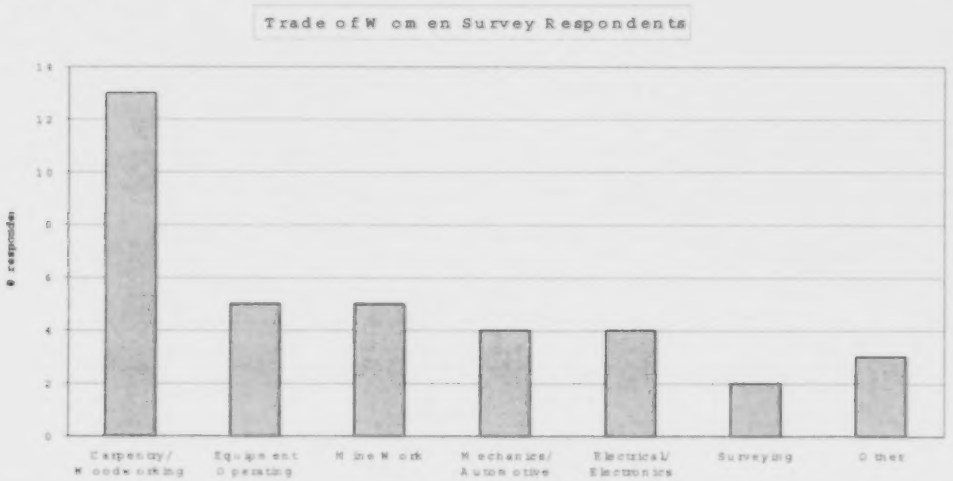
The Yukon women in trades who attended the focus groups were wary about being singled out. They felt proud of their hard work and determination, and were generally resistant to the notion that they had succeeded in trades ***because of*** or ***in spite of*** the fact that they are women.

However, these women recognized the fact that many women are not entering trades, and the need to ensure that Yukon women, particularly young women, are aware of the full range of employment options. Comments and advice from the focus groups are included in the 'Recommendations' section of this report.

A Description of the Women Who Participated in the Survey

Thirty-six written responses were included in the survey results. Out of the thirty-six, thirteen women were in carpentry or woodworking, five were equipment operators, five were mine workers, four were in mechanics or automotive service, four were in electrical or electronics, two were surveyors, and there was one each of partsperson, sheet metal worker, and firefighter. Four of the women were currently studying outside of the territory. Forty-four percent of women who participated had been working in trades for between one and five years, and 36% of women surveyed had been studying or working in trades for more than 6 years - several of the women surveyed had been working in trades for more than 20 years!

Figure 5:



(Source: Kirsten Madsen, Survey of Yukon Women in Trades, Unpublished Data, 1999)*

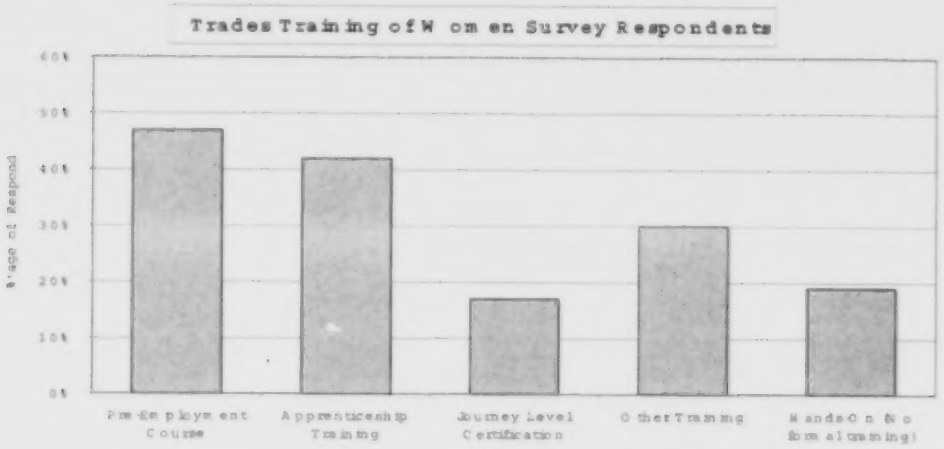
Eight of the women surveyed (22%) listed their ethnic background as aboriginal. Nearly 70% of the women have been living in the Yukon for more than ten years. Thirty-nine percent of the women had children living at home.

Age of Survey Respondents	
Age 25 and Younger	17%
Between Age 26 and 35	25%
Between Age 36 and 45	39%
Age 46 and Older	14%

*All following graphs in this report are from Kirsten Madsen, Survey of Yukon Women in Trades, Unpublished Data, 1999.

The following graph shows the trades training taken by the women who completed the survey. Most of these women had taken some training in trades, usually a pre-employment course. However, nearly 20% of the women said they had taken no formal trades training, but instead learned their skills through 'hands-on' experience, at home or on the job.

Figure 6:



While working in trades, 64% of the women had worked in the private sector, 44% of the women had worked in the public sector, and 44% had owned their own business. At the time of the survey, only 19% of the women surveyed were union members.

The women had generally achieved a high level of education: 39% had some university education or a university degree, and 33% had some college or a college diploma/ certificate. Those with a high school diploma made up 14%, and only 11% had less than a grade 12 education.

Nearly half of the women had worked in low-paid 'traditional' women's jobs, including secretarial work, cleaning, dishwashing, and retail sales, before moving into trades. A quarter of the women surveyed had at one time worked as a waitress. Other jobs done by these women included photographer, flight attendant, cosmetic salesperson, musician, sailing instructor and shepherd.

" I have always worked in the service industry and I had the opportunity to work in a mine last year and I loved it."

Forty-four percent of the women who participated in the survey were not currently working in a trade. There were a variety of reasons why they had left the trade. A quarter of these women were simply looking for a new challenge. Many women who had taken a trades course never intended a career but studied out of interest. Two of the women left trades jobs because of injuries sustained at the workplace. Only one woman said she left the trade because she didn't enjoy it.

In fact, 81% of the women who were no longer in trades said that they found their experience in trades beneficial. They felt it was a good experience to have, one that had broadened their horizons. Many found the practical skills learned in trades work useful in other areas of their lives.

" I now have a good knowledge of basic machinery which helps me troubleshoot problems and maintain my vehicle."

" I never intended to enter the trades as a career, but I still use my carpentry training all the time - building sheds, decks, and greenhouses, as well as home repairs."

" Hands on work is going towards being self-reliant. I believe in this."

The 'Men's' Survey: Instructors, Employers, Industry and Union

Surveys from 25 men were included in the results of this survey. Eighty-eight percent of these men had worked or were currently working with or teaching women in trades. Slightly more than half of them were teachers or instructors, and others were employers, industry or union representatives, apprenticeship supervisors or co-workers.

" I'm looking out my window right now at a new woman apprentice and she is going to be GREAT!!"

When asked if they felt that women were present in adequate numbers in non-traditional trade occupations and programs in the Yukon, 76% of the men said no. Four percent said yes, and 20% chose the 'other' category. Many of these questioned the use of the word adequate.

Fifty-six percent of the men surveyed had not noticed any changes or trends in the numbers of women participating in their trade. Of the 44% who had noticed changes, one third said the numbers were increasing, one third said the numbers remained much the same, and 8% said numbers were decreasing.

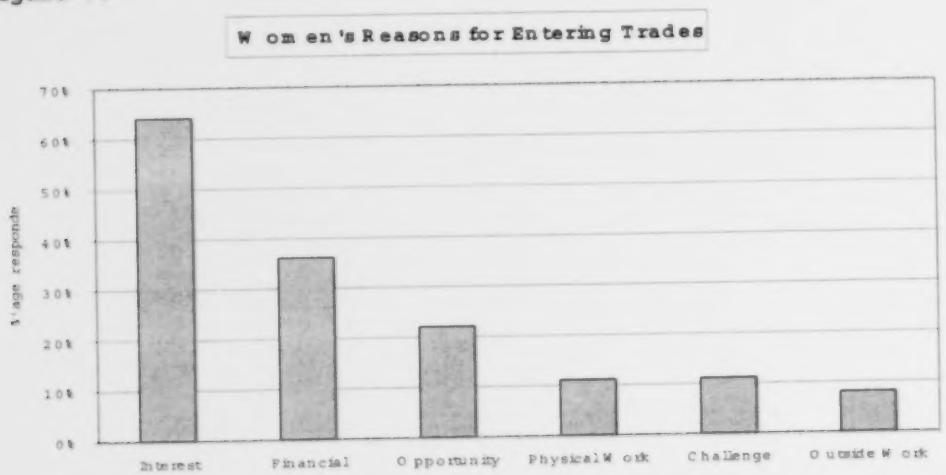
" More women are entering the trade. They seem to be self-assured individuals and indeed need to be to endure the nonsense that close-minded men they encounter hand them."

Situation of Yukon Women in Trades

Entering Trades

The women who completed the survey were asked to list the main reasons why they'd chosen to enter a program or career in trades. The following graph shows their responses.

Figure 7:



Many women who went into trades did so because of personal interest. Other women entered trades programs or careers for financial reasons. A woman who worked for over 20 years as an equipment operator said, *" As a single parent I needed a job I could raise a family on by myself."*

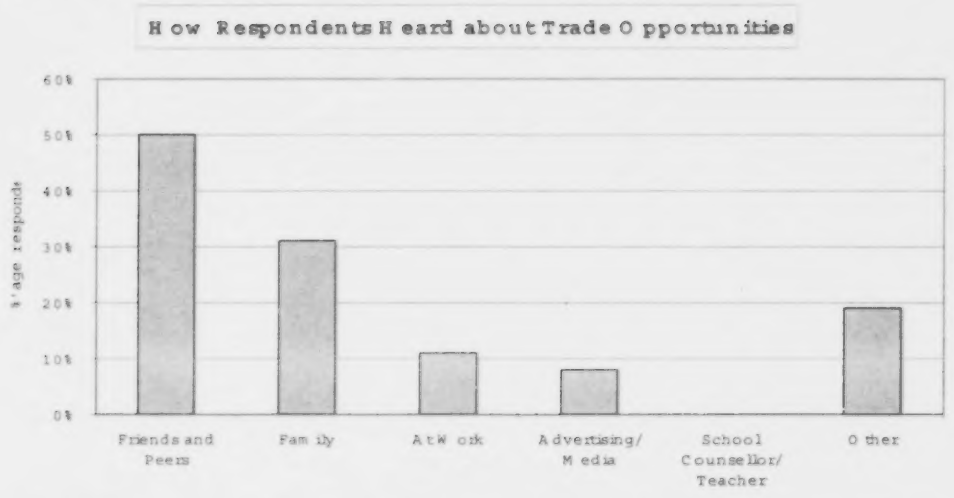
Other reasons given were opportunity, challenge, the enjoyment of physical work and the enjoyment of working outside.

A woman who studied auto mechanics stated she started her studies *" To increase my independence - knowing how to fix my vehicle and get myself out of jams. I have always been fascinated by machinery and wanted to learn."*

A carpenter said *" I've always liked to work physically and to be able to see what I'd done that day; a sense of accomplishment."* A woman who works in construction stated that *" it's good money, it's challenging and I get to work outside!"*

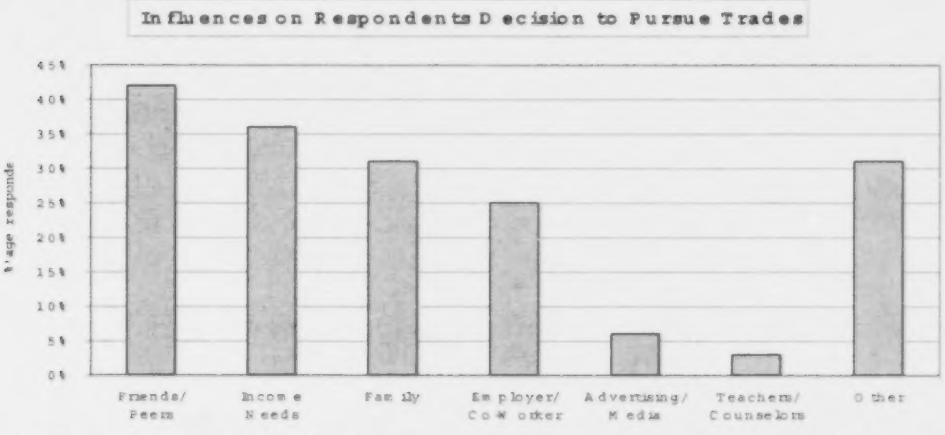
Women were asked how old they were when they entered a trades job or program. The ages given ranged from 15 to 40, with the average age of entry into trades being 25. Most of the women (44%) were between the ages of 25 and 34 when they entered trades. This information has implications for policy makers. It means that many women entering trades are not doing so directly after high school but are coming into it later, after working at jobs in other areas. Supports and incentives therefore need to be directed at these " returning" women, as well as increased encouragement of women at the high school level.

Figure 8:



Most of the women surveyed found out about opportunities in trades from their friends and peers, or family. Not one woman answered that she had found out about trades opportunities from a school counselor or teacher, and only 8% said that they had heard about opportunities through advertising or media.

Figure 9:



Friends and peers had the biggest influence on women's decision to pursue trades. Income needs was the next most chosen, followed by family. Many women answered " Myself!" to this question.

" I always figured that I needed more money to support my child and give her a better life."

The majority of the women surveyed did not need further schooling to meet educational requirements before entry into their program or trade. Only 8% needed some upgrading in math or general education.

Work Environment

Forty-two percent of women said that the attitude of employers to hiring female trades people was good.

" I have been very lucky to have excellent employers."

" Excellent, totally supportive."

" My employer was great! One other woodworker I had approached for a job answered he had a house I could

One woman felt being female was an asset to employment: *" In my experience, employers like to hire women operators. Easier on the equipment, more safety-minded."*

Thirty-six percent of women found that employers had a poor attitude when it came to hiring women. *" I think it will take time before women are really accepted,"* one woman said.

" They are reluctant to do so. Employers seem to have trouble taking women as real trades people seriously."

" Hesitant. They think that all things will have to change. Political correctness scares them, and they think if they say the wrong thing you will sue or something. So to be safe they hire a guy."

" There are all men supervisors from when I started to now, who belong to the 'old boys club' and believe that women should be at home. Women can't advance in the same way that men do."

Women were asked if they felt that men in their program or trade are uncomfortable with the presence of women co-workers. Half of them said yes. However, most of these qualified their answer: *" Some are, but it is a temporary thing, soon they know more and see you as just another worker"* or *" only experienced resentment when in a supervisory position."*

" I think they were uncomfortable because I was getting better marks and results than they were (I finished top in my class). They may have had the strength but I had the 'smarts' and patience."

One woman listed the reasons for men's resentment: *" They feel threatened that we are taking 'their jobs.' Or they always have to help us, or they have to catch themselves not to swear or talk about women or sex."*

" Sometimes you work with 'rednecks.' You might show them up or they feel like they can't burp and fart anymore. And WHO CARES

Another woman had an opposite, but similarly negative experience: *" I didn't get a hard time, but was shown no respect either. No one changed their behavior to accommodate me as a woman."*

It is important to keep in mind that 47% of the women did not feel that the men around them were uncomfortable with the presence of women. As one woman said, *" I was concerned that I would fail, and men would look at me as a failure. But they were supportive."*

" Once you work with a group of men they come to respect you after a while, once they see that you know your job and are on a par with the best of them."

" Overall I have found my peers to be great. I have found my instructor very encouraging and supportive."

> ***" The experience I've had with other tradesmen in Whitehorse has been good. I was impressed with how open they were, encouraging and***

Twenty percent of the men surveyed felt that other men in their trade were uncomfortable with the presence of female co-workers.

When asked in what way, most of the respondents chose the option stating that men 'feel they must behave and speak differently.' Several also said men 'feel that women get special treatment or unfair advantages' or that men 'feel their wives/partners won't like them working with a woman.'

One instructor stated, *" If male students feel threatened it is because they don't want the 'girls' to produce a better product faster than themselves."*

The survey respondents were asked if the physical work environment - facilities, equipment - provided by their program or employer is appropriate to women. Eighty-nine percent of women and 92% of men said that the physical environment was appropriate. Some concerns that were mentioned by the women were lack of bathroom facilities or privacy for women and equipment or machinery not designed for women's use.

The Yukon Situation

More than half of the women surveyed (64%) felt that the situation of women in trades was different in the Yukon than in other parts of Canada. Three quarters of these said that there was greater acceptance of women in trades in the Yukon.

" It seems more acceptable for women to be stronger and more capable here."

" It's a different atmosphere in the Yukon. Everyone pulls their own weight."

" Traditionally women have always done anything -whatever needed to be done - up here, in the North. There's a lot of tough women up here."

Physical Strength

The instructors, employers and industry representatives were asked if safety, health, or physical considerations might prevent women from pursuing trades occupations. Twenty-eight percent of these men said yes. They felt that women lacked the physical strength or size to succeed at some strenuous trades jobs. One said, *" Most women lack sufficient strength to do all tasks required -could result in a less safe work environment or physical problems."*

Women surveyed were asked if they had worried about personal strength or fitness when considering studying or working in a trade. Over half of them said yes. When asked if their fitness or strength had turned out to be a

problem in the performance of their work, 78% of these women said no, 22% said sometimes, and not one women answered that yes, strength had been a problem they were unable to overcome.

" I was worried about my physical strength but the teacher was good at giving leverage tips."

" Physical limitations? You learn all the physics eventually, there's nothing you can't do. Mostly if you're in a shop and you need to lift something heavy, there's always people around."

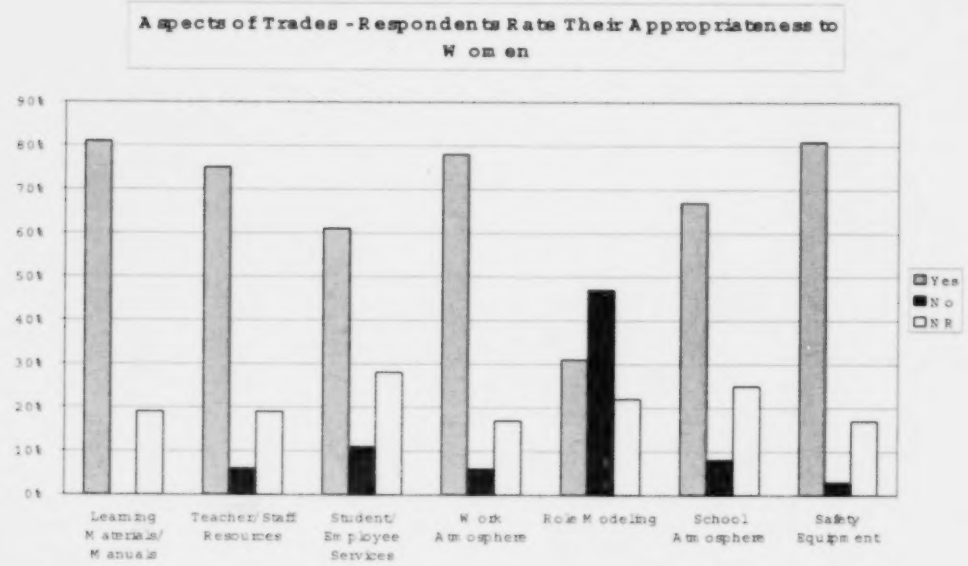
" You realize that there are ways and means of lifting heavy objects without hurting yourself."

One woman pointed out that *" You do need physical strength, and not everybody has it. Not everybody wants to have big muscles."* Another said she found that she quickly got in better shape once she was on the job. Another woman found her small size to be an advantage:

" My size hindered me until I started working. And then I pointed out, I'm better in crawl spaces, attics, and I have the strength. I'm stronger than I look, and I'm stronger than they expect. That actually worked in my favor. It's the same with mechanics - if you're smaller you can get into places that others can't get into with huge paws."

Other Aspects of Trades Programs or Jobs

Women were asked if certain aspects of trades programs or jobs were appropriate to women. Their answers are shown in the following graph.
Figure 10:



In particular, female role models are clearly lacking for women in trades.

Balancing Home and Work

Women were asked if their participation in a trade program or job affected their ability to meet their other responsibilities at home. Thirty-one percent said yes, and 67% said no. However, 71% of the women in the survey group *with children* said that their participation in trades affected their ability to cope with their household duties. These women mentioned childcare problems, inability to keep up with housework, and problems associated with being away from home too much.

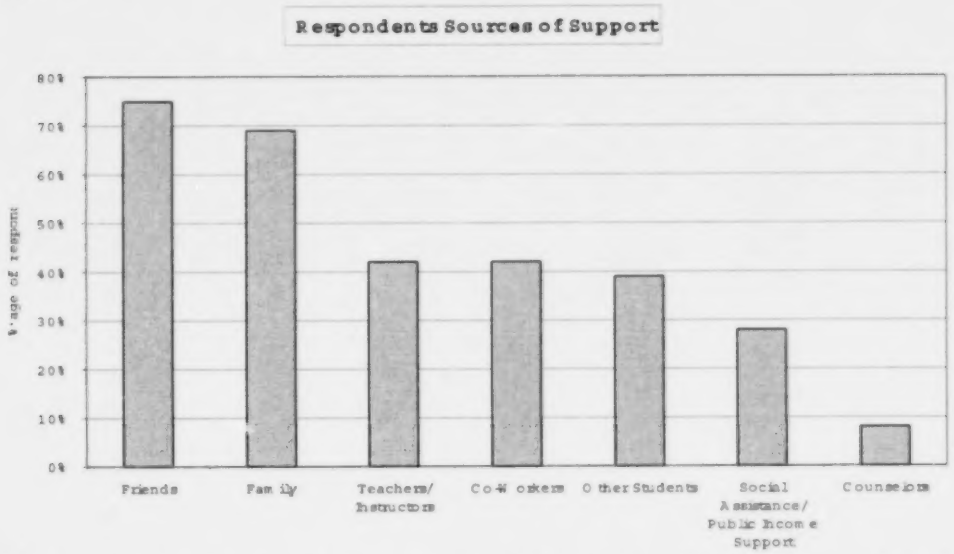
" I have a hard time with household needs (laundry, cleaning, cooking, childcare). I'm a single parent so sometimes it is very hard."

" Outside schooling is terribly hard on mothers with families, especially if they are single mothers. Financial hardships associated with trying to keep two households up and running while at school. Daycare from 500 miles away; loneliness."

Sources of Support

The women who responded to the survey were asked where they had found support during their work or studies. Supports can include help, encouragement or financial aid.

Figure 11:



The support women received from friends and family well outweighed the supports they received from institutional sources.

Concerns

Women surveyed were asked about concerns they may have had when initially considering a career or training in trades. Their main concerns are shown in the following graph.

Figure 12:

Almost all the women who were concerned about their own ability found that this concern left them as they continued to work in trades.

" I found that it is easier than I first thought. Common sense and good technical understanding is all it takes."

" I was concerned I couldn't do it. Now I realize I can work with my hands and if I put enough effort into it I can learn how to do

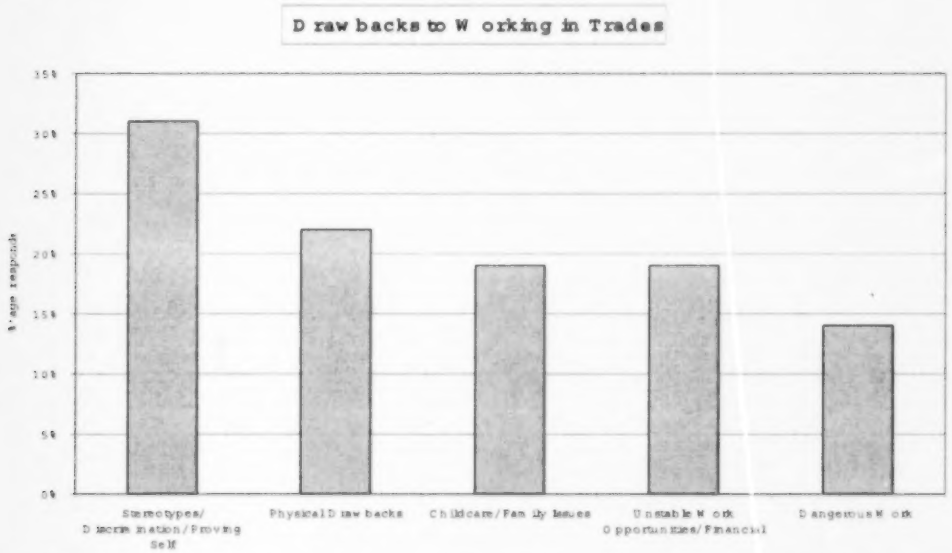
Many of the other concerns women felt were alleviated as they learned more about trades and gained workplace survival skills.

" My main concern was 'will I find work?' Now that I've worked in the trades for ten years, I have no doubt that I can find work."

The Drawbacks to Working in Trades

Women who participated in the survey were asked to list the main drawbacks to working in or studying trades.

Figure 13:



The drawback expressed by the most women was dealing with stereotypes or discrimination, or continually having to prove themselves capable to do their jobs. While the other drawbacks mentioned are ones that would apply to anyone, man or woman, working in trades (with the possible exception of childcare issues), women alone face the difficulty of this type of discrimination.

The Benefits of Working in Trades

Women who participated in the survey were asked to list the main benefits of working in or studying trades.

Figure 14:

Job satisfaction and better wages were the most often cited answers. Other benefits commonly mentioned included working outdoors, physical work, and the fact that trades work is varied and interesting. Thirty-one percent of women said that working at a trades job helped build their confidence and self-esteem.

" It helped me to see that I was just as capable as most men out in the work force."

" Self-satisfaction. I'm proud of my accomplishments. It's a good background for better jobs in other areas."

" Working independently, outside, using your body and keeping fit while you're working."

Another woman in trades stated that *" earning respect and acceptance of men in general"* was another benefit of her job .

Seventy-seven percent of the surveyed Yukon women in trades said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their career choice. Seventy-five percent of them said that the benefits of studying or working in a non-traditional area outweighed the negative aspects. These are impressive statistics considering the potential barriers these women faced and overcame. Perhaps if more women knew the facts about job-satisfaction in trades work they would be more likely to consider widening their career options to include these areas.

" My (trades) class is terrific. I feel comfortable beyond my expectations. I think this is largely due to my teacher. The guys are great."

Barriers

Barriers to Entering Trades

Slightly less than half of the women (42%) surveyed reported that they had experienced barriers to entering trades that they felt their male counterparts did not. The most common barrier these women experienced was discrimination or sexist treatment when they moved into trades jobs (53%).

" Co-workers seem to treat you like an invalid or challenge you to see if you can do it."

" When I was on the site I would be treated like a lady who didn't want to break a nail. Other laborers would be sent over to 'help' me do my job."

" My only real barrier was approaching banks for money so that I could purchase the business I was working for. I feel that because I was female they didn't take me seriously."

A related barrier, one expressed by 27% of the women who had experienced barriers, was that they felt they had to work much harder than men to prove themselves to their employers, teachers, and co-workers.

" I feel women have to work twice as hard or learn more than men because it seems like men are waiting for either failure or to hold your hand through it."

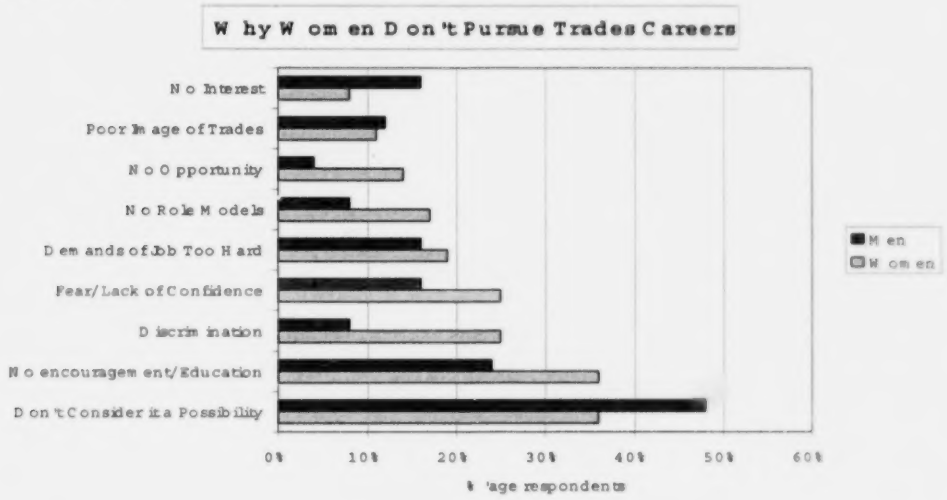
" I had to prove I had the right to be there whereas the men were naturally accepted."

" I feel like I always have to prove myself or I will get all the jobs nobody else (men) wants to do. Every camp or different man I work with, I have to prove I know my job"

Other barriers to entering trades experienced by women included difficulty finding financial support for training and lack of support from family members: *" My friends and family did not think it was a good idea - lots of discouragement."*

Both women and men who participated in the survey were asked to list the reasons why many women do not consider trades as a career options. Their responses are compared in the following graph.

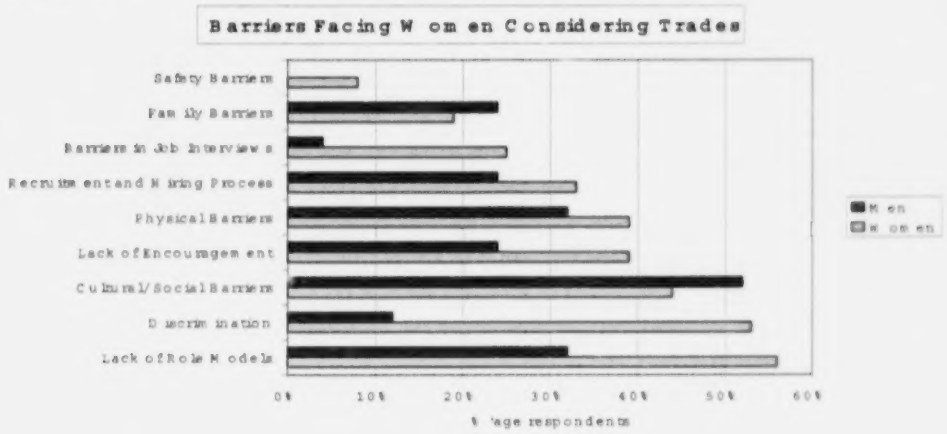
Figure 15:



It is interesting to note that women in trades rated discrimination, lack of role models, and lack of opportunities as much higher determinants than did men in trades. On the other hand, more men than women in trades felt that women's lack of interest affected their participation in trades.

Survey respondents were asked if they felt that women considering careers or education in the trades in the Yukon face barriers that men do not. Ninety-two percent of the women and 72% of the men answered yes. The graph below illustrates what they felt were the greatest barriers facing women when considering entering trades.

Figure 16:



Again, women rated discrimination and lack of role models as barriers more often than men in trades, whereas men more often noted the effects of cultural/ social and family barriers.

Men were asked if cultural or social considerations might prevent women from pursuing trades occupations. Seventy-two percent of men said yes. Most of these men felt that the socialization or upbringing of women with conventional attitudes leads them to careers in more traditional areas.

" Conventional attitudes - only strong people swim against the tide."

" Many women see it as 'less feminine'."

" The work is dirty and physically taxing, aspects that are not emphasized as appropriate for women in our culture."

One man said, *" I think it's genetic."*

Other men said that discrimination facing women in the workplace might discourage them from pursuing trades careers.

" Men tend to be either condescending and patronizing or outright discouraging to women when they first start. After a woman has 'proven herself' (better than the men) then she is more likely to be accepted."

" A woman who enters a male dominated trades work site will be tested in many ways. Competence, strength, and with some guys, ability to take ribbing or joking around."

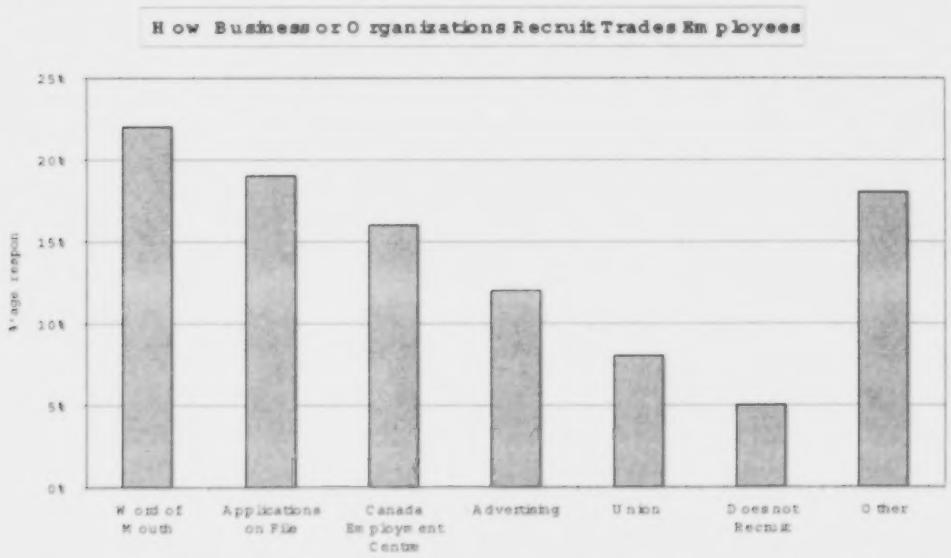
Men were asked if family considerations might prevent women from pursuing trades occupations. Sixty-eight percent of men said yes. Many of these men (39%) thought trades work would pose problems for pregnant women and women with children. *" Women with small children have trouble doing 8-5 and shift work,"* one man pointed out. Others (28%) thought the problem would be the expectation that women would stay home and raise families rather than work. Another portion (22%) of the men mentioned that women might be discouraged by their families from entering trades careers.

" Family support is important to promote trades from an early age."

" Daddy doesn't want his little girl to be a mechanic."

Men were asked how their business or organization recruits trades employees. The results are displayed in the following graph. The most common response was 'word of mouth.'

Figure 17:



Women were asked if the recruitment and hiring method of trades industry and employers is a barrier to women. One third of the women said yes. The most common reason stated was that traditional and sexist stereotypes about women influence employers' hiring decisions. Again, women felt they would have to prove themselves capable before being accepted. Another barrier to getting hired was felt to be the fact that many women don't have the necessary contacts in the trades community. When jobs are advertised through word of mouth, and it is clear from the above table that they are, many women may not hear about them.

" It's still a matter of networking and women don't necessarily have the social contacts."

Over half of the men (56%) said that the way most trade employees are recruited and hired is not a barrier to women. Twenty percent said that the way most trade employees are recruited and hired is a barrier to women. Most of these said that the 'old boys network', or women's lack of connections would hinder them. The others thought that employers might discriminate against women when hiring employees.

One man said, *" Traditional hiring practices by established firms do not support women."*

Barriers Experienced While Working in Trades

The survey respondents were asked if stereotypes about women had affected their participation in the trades. Thirty-six percent said yes. Thirty-eight percent of these had experienced discrimination in their workplace.

" I have tried to advance myself to higher positions, but a lot of men do not like women supervisors in my trade. So I will probably retire

" I was constantly on guard not to show weakness. My instructor told me, 'this is nothing, this is what you can expect.' He did nothing to make it a respectful environment, but said 'it'll be worse out in the field.'"

Again, the pressure women felt to prove themselves in a hostile or wary work environment was a commonly expressed barrier. Twenty-three percent of the women who had been affected by stereotyping said this.

" Working in an area of mostly men you could feel the tension. It was like you were not wanted there, although nothing was ever said."

Several of the women said that responding to negative stereotypes about women only made them more determined to succeed in trades.

" It affected me in a positive way because it was a challenge I knew I could meet."

" It was assumed I didn't have an interest. It made me take initiative."

" Perhaps being a woman has made me more determined not to fail, and to be taken seriously."

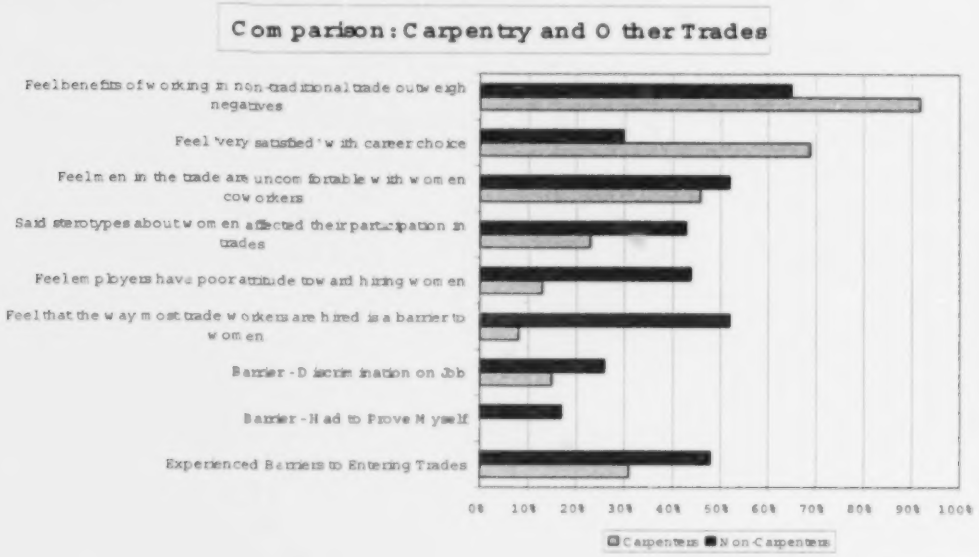
Of the men surveyed, 64% felt that women working in or studying trades in the Yukon face barriers that their male counterparts do not. Twenty-four percent of men surveyed felt that cultural barriers and socialization affected women working in trades. Another 24% felt that these led to negative attitudes and discrimination towards women. Twelve percent of men mentioned physical barriers.

One man said, *" It's non-traditional. It's dirty. It's dangerous. Women are a very definite minority in construction and it's difficult to be the only woman in a crew of 20."*

Different Sectors in Trades

The majority of the women who participated in the survey were studying or working in carpentry, or woodworking jobs such as construction and cabinet or furniture making. While they shared many of the concerns expressed by women in other trades, the survey results showed that in general, these women had a more positive experience in terms of acceptance and respect by the men in their trade. Women who worked in other areas such as mining, heavy equipment operation, electrical or mechanics expressed more serious concerns.

The following graph displays some of the different perceptions of women in carpentry or woodworking, and women in other trades.
Figure 18:


Comparison: Carpentry and Other Trades
Feel benefits of working in non-traditional trade outweigh negatives
Feel 'very satisfied' with career choice
Feel men in the trade are uncomfortable with women co-workers
Said stereotypes about women affected their participation in trades
Feel employers have poor attitude toward hiring women
Feel that the way most trade workers are hired is a barrier to women
Barrier - Discrimination on Job
Barrier - Had to Prove Myself
Experienced Barriers to Entering Trades
0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
Carpenters
Non-Carpenters

Whether it is because traditionally there have been more women in carpentry and woodworking trades, or because of differences in attitude between those who choose carpentry and those who choose other trades careers, it is clear that the experiences of women in carpentry are on the whole more positive.

Women in Trades - the Men's Perspective

The men in trades were asked if the classroom or work environment was affected by the presence of women. Half of them said yes. Most of them found that women had a positive effect.

" Less foolishness, more learning."

" I find the classroom is more respectful when women are present."

" Better language and conduct by other students."

" Men tend to be more considerate of others when women are present. It's a healthier learning environment."

A few men felt that women caused some disruption in the work environment. One said, *" It changes the group dynamic, causing awkwardness. Women need to become 'one of the boys,' take things in stride."*

When asked about unique problems or concerns they saw women facing in their trade or industry, 32% of the men stated that women in trades face problems based on gender acceptance and attitudes. As one man described his trade, *" It's all male, like a locker room."* Twenty percent of the men brought up physical or safety problems, or bathroom issues.

Men in trades were asked about some of the unique skills or abilities they felt women could bring to their program or industry. Several shared the opinion of one man, who said, *" None. People are people."* Many, however, mentioned areas where they felt women were particularly beneficial to the trades environment. One mentioned *" respect towards co-workers,"* and several mentioned *" attention to details, neatness and precision."* Another man said that women do *" far more thoughtful, conscientious, meticulous work."*

" Women tend to be more meticulous than men. They also tend to be better at customer relations."

" Women have a different way of approaching problem solving."

" Women tend to have more patience and pride in a job well done. Women also tend to be more meticulous and can be left alone to take a tedious task to completion."

Assumptions About Women in Trades

The men - trades instructors, workers, and employers - were asked several questions about the assumptions men and women make about women's participation in trades. When asked what assumptions women make about trades that turn out to be correct, most men mentioned that women are correct about the fact that they may face barriers. Men also mentioned that women are correct about the hard work and good pay involved in trades jobs. When asked what assumptions women make about trades that turn out to be wrong, 65% of the responses were that women are wrong when they think *" I can't do it."* Eighteen percent of the responses also pointed out that women are wrong if they think *" all trades men are jerks."*

When asked about men's assumptions, some men said that men may be right when they assume women don't have the physical strength to perform some tasks. *" Sometimes women can't do the physical work, sometimes they are slower, sometimes they won't pull their weight."*

" Women do not have the physical strength, women use tears and high emotions when upset."

However, when asked what assumptions men make that turn out to be incorrect, 71% of the responses were that men are wrong if they think that women can't do trades, and 29% of the responses were that men are wrong if they think that women aren't strong enough to work in trades.

" Not only can women do the work, but they can do it very well. Men always seem to be surprised that women can be as vulgar, or worse, than they can."

Another tradesman said that men are wrong if they think that women *" won't persevere and make a career of it."*

First Nations and Trades

First Nations workers in trades can face additional barriers to equal participation. While this study did not explicitly examine the situation of First Nations and trades, 22% of the women respondents were of First Nations descent. They offered some advice for policy makers.

" Maybe they should have a woman teaching them to make them more comfortable. Especially First Nations."

" Have women teaching them or showing them. Keep them as close to their home as possible."

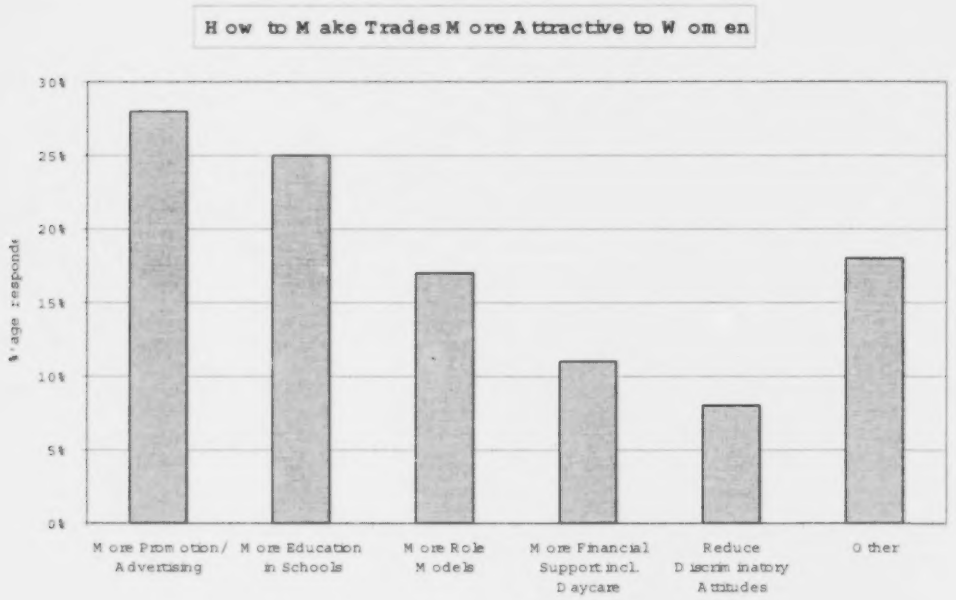
Financial support for members of First Nations who wish to take further education is available from the DIAND. However, DIAND funds only 'college preparation' and academic programs, and does not offer financial support for those wishing to take trades training. This funding is available from individual First Nations Bands (Champagne Aishihik and Kwanlin Dun First Nations, Personal Communication). It is not known for sure how much awareness there is among First Nations youth and women about training opportunities in trades.

Recommendations

> *" It is a fact that men can do 'women's work' and that women can do 'men's work.' Both should have equal opportunity to choose the work they do. Both should receive the same rate of pay for work done. Both should receive the same support from friends, family and the educational system from kindergarten*

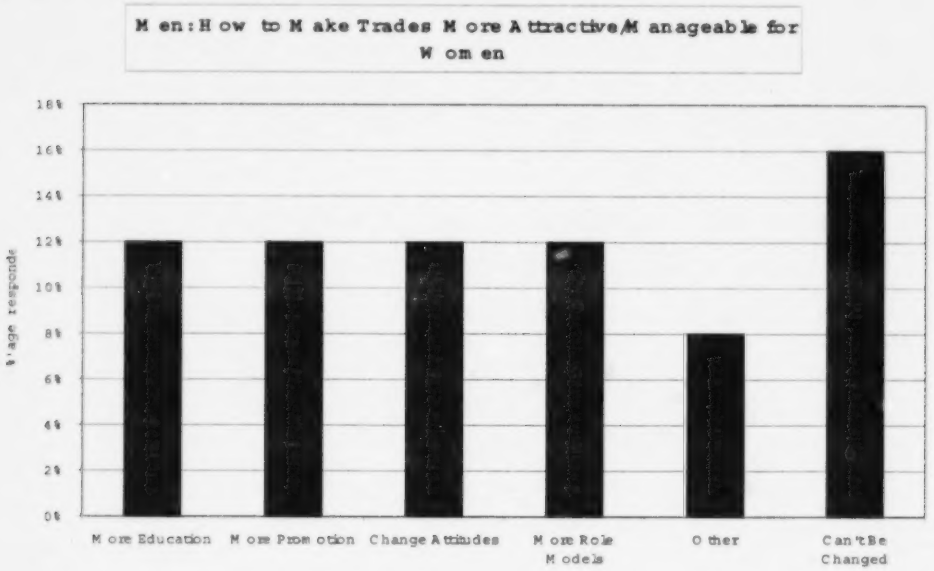
Women in trades who participated in the survey were asked how their program or trade could be changed to make it more attractive to women who are considering a trades career. The results are summarized in the following graph.

Figure 19:



Men in trades were asked how their program or trade could be changed to make it more attractive or manageable for women. The results are summarized in the following graph.

Figure 20:



Yukon women and men in trades who participated in the survey and focus groups gave many recommendations, based on their experience, for making trades an attractive, manageable, and successful option for women. Their comments and concerns are listed throughout this section.

• Improve and Increase Education

Nearly everyone who participated in the surveys and focus groups felt that more education was needed to promote trades to women from a young age. Several people pointed out that trades have a poor image with both young women and men. What is needed, in the opinion of one tradesman, is *" an awareness that trades are not where 'dumb' people go, that if you are good at anything, trades, management, whatever; you'll be employed and happy."*

The Canadian Labour Force Development Board's National Apprenticeship Committee is attempting to raise the minimum entry level requirements for apprenticeships and also to broaden the traditional image of trades workers. *" The trades of today and tomorrow will need recruits who are not only technically competent, but who possess a range of skills, including communication and interpersonal skills, as well as the ability to participate in life long learning"* (1994, p. 3).

While girls today are entering university in greater numbers than ever, and have overcome many educational barriers, most are still not widening their options to include trades. Many young people are pushed by their parents and teachers towards academics.

As one teacher said, *" Females enroll in the 'academic' stream and therefore they cannot fit a trades course in if they want to meet graduation requirements."*

However, not everyone who enters university graduates, and many young people who are pushed towards academics find they cannot succeed in this area. While young men who do not want to go to university are more likely to consider a trade, young women traditionally tend to end up in low-paying jobs in the service industry, clerical work, or child care. Young women are unlikely to consider trades careers, it seems, unless they have a strong family influence, take a shop class, see female role models in trades, or they get some kind of 'hands-on' experience that shows them they can succeed in this 'non-traditional' career.

> ***" Attitude and education are the two things. You're not telling the kids, you have to go into a specific area, you are allowing them to build the confidence in the areas they want. Not all women want to be in trades: the ones that do,***

(See the 'recommendations for increasing young women's participation in trades' section for more on education.)

Education and incentives are needed, not only to encourage young women to broaden their options, but also to encourage women in later stages of life, who may be dissatisfied with their jobs or re-entering the labour force. Working women who have problems in the areas of job satisfaction, mobility, and economic return should consider non-traditional occupations. Yet women such as this are often unaware of nontraditional job opportunities or are wary of working in predominantly male settings. The challenge for educators and program recruiters is to help women overcome this ideological barrier so that they will consider non-traditional careers. They need to be *" personally told that they can be successful in a trade, that many other women just like them have succeeded, and that many women working in these fields feel satisfied with their choices"* (Howell and Schwartz, 1988, p.66). The idea is not to entice women into these careers or training programs, or tell them what they 'should' be doing, but to offer this training as a viable option and to help women make informed choices.

It is important to ensure that screening programs do not eliminate women from programs on an artificial basis. Career aptitude and assessment tools may actually have the effect of screening women out of trades, technology, and science occupations. Male and female career counselors may also exhibit resistance in accepting the changing career priorities of women. Or women's own upbringing and sex-role stereotyped attitudes, combined with lack of self-confidence and lack of awareness about trades, may give them a false impression of their own interests and abilities in trades (Green and Stitt-Gohdes, 1997).

It is a fact that trade work is well-paid, can be highly satisfying, can be flexible, offers opportunities for self-employment, and offers occupational mobility. These are not dead-end careers but instead growing, changing industries with opportunities for creativity, intelligence, and imagination. Women who are not aware of these facts may limit their own options.

- **Teach Women the 'Survival Skills' They Need to Work in a Non-traditional Environment**

" Women need to be made more aware of the problems they will run into."

The Yukon women who participated in the focus groups had many words of advice for women on how to succeed in trades. Though many of them stated that the barriers they experienced were few, this may be because they had learned skills for circumventing or overcoming potential barriers.

" You have to be the type of person that demands respect. Like I'd clobber a guy if he was rude or sexually abusive or something like that. I wouldn't take it."

" They don't bother me and I don't bother them. When the shift's over I just go to my room and stay there."

" I used to wonder if I'd be accepted in the trades. Over the years that I have been involved in trades I have found that attitude is the most important aspect we take

" You've got to be outspoken. You've got to be polite - politely firm, and to the point. And calm. If you lose your temper, you're lost. You lose all credibility with the men. You have to pull your weight. You don't have to talk to them. If you pull your weight, the men generally accept you. If you have a good rapport, if you're not intimidated by them."

" You have to ask a lot of questions. I learned that really quickly - if you don't ask questions, nobody will tell you."

Women entering trades need task-specific information about the job they are undertaking, but they also need information about the work culture to help them fit in. Many 'Women in Trades' courses include assertiveness or life-skills training to help women learn to deal with negative stereotypes or communication issues in the workplace. As stated in *The Back to School Survival Guide for Women*, *" Sometimes men are not that welcoming to women entering these fields, but let's face it, a woman working in a traditional female job can be just as harassed. Sticking to " women's jobs" has not really made us any safer, just poorer"* (Randall, 1993).

• Increase Family Support

Slightly more than 30% of the women in trades who participated in the survey reported that their families were a source of knowledge about trades and influence on their decision to pursue these careers. It is clearly important to educate parents to provide a supportive environment for children who pursue non-traditional career choices.

" My mother was a really strong woman, and she raised three kids, and there wasn't any difference - boys or girls. We all learned to cook and do whatever needed to be done. I'm very lucky. I'm really lucky to have her as a role model."

" I think your parents are a pretty big influence. I mean if you're constantly told you should be playing with dolls or you should be doing clerical work, then how are you ever going to get the idea that you could be a mechanic or a carpenter? That is a big part of it, and I realize that the eight of us sitting here today can't really influence the way parents teach

their kids, but I think I was very lucky in how I was raised - my dad took me everywhere."

• Combat Negative Socialization

It is not easy to make sweeping changes to the way young women and men learn about their gender. It is important, however, to recognize that the messages we give young people about their abilities and attitudes affects their future opportunities. Even in a society that has come a long way towards gender equality, young women are socialized differently than their male counterparts.

" I have two teenage daughters, and I grew up a tomboy, but no matter how much I've influenced them, both my daughters, when they hit grade seven, they lost their ability for voice, and they tend to back down in group dynamics with boys. I watch them, because they're strong and they're pushy, and then the boys come in and they tend to bat their eyes."

" My daughter can be very bright, but at thirteen, the interactions change - if there's a male there, she will back down. And I know that we all go through that, but I'm afraid that, in a shop class she might have been really suited. Times change, but she may have missed something that she was really interested in because of not being able to assert herself."

The work of gender equity committees in Yukon schools, and the continuing education of teachers and parents, with respect to giving young women encouragement, options, and opportunities, will help affect positive change in the areas of confidence and success.

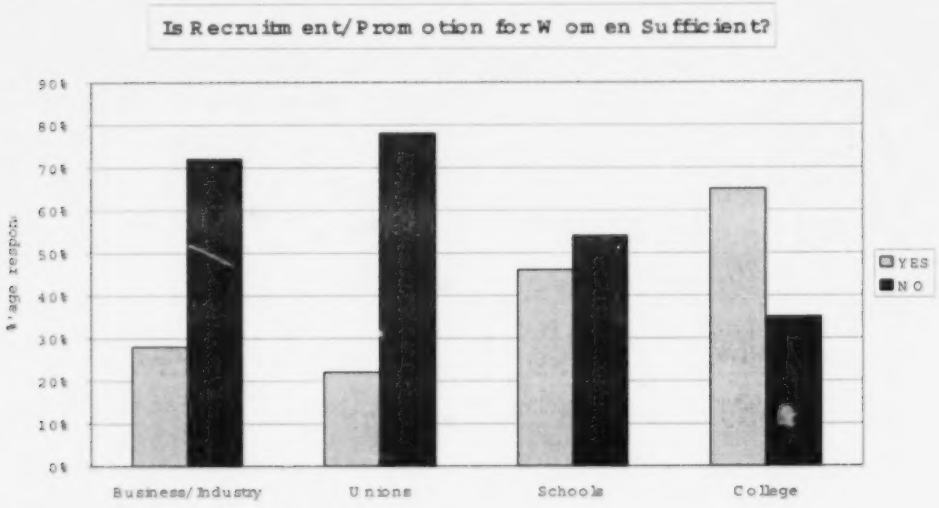
Socialization does not just affect young women. When asked about the drawbacks to working in trades, Yukon women surveyed listed many things that would be a problem equally for men and women - the physical drawbacks, the unstable work opportunities, the dangerous work. However, the number one drawback these women stated was dealing with stereotypes and discrimination, and being forced to continually prove themselves capable of participating in the trades environment.

The existence of positive female role models in trades will go a long way towards improving women's and men's images of women in trades.

• Increase Promotion

Women surveyed were asked to consider the recruitment and promotion efforts of the following institutions with respect to attracting women to trades. The results are summarized in the following graph.

Figure 21:



Sixty-four percent of the men surveyed said they did not think that trades occupations are advertised and promoted well enough to attract women.

Forty-four percent of the men were not aware of any promotional activities related to increasing the participation of women in their trade. Some of the activities mentioned by the other 56% included government promotion and advertising, Skills Canada, Youth Exploring Trades and Technology camps, and college promotions.

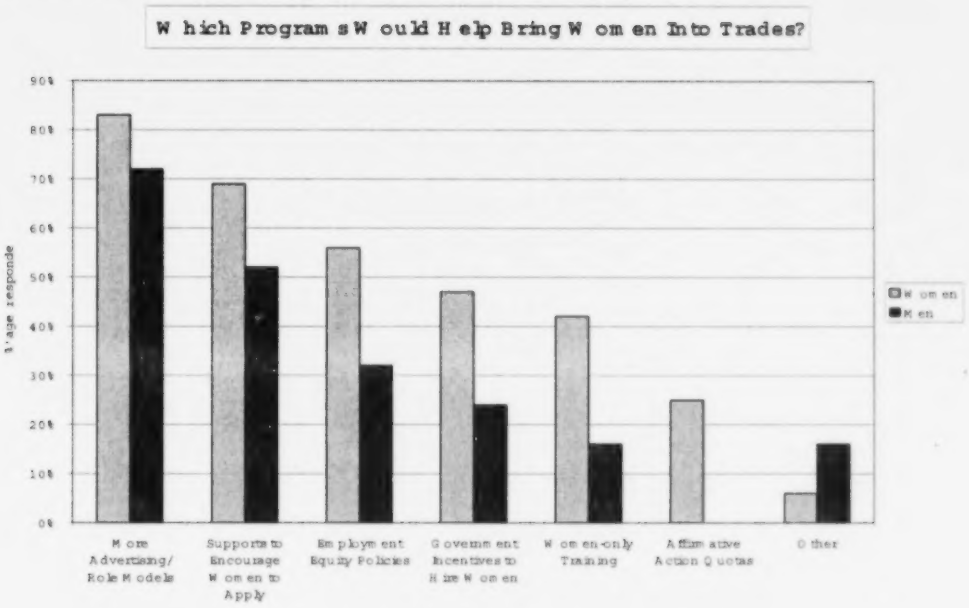
Recruitment of women into trades employment or education needs to go beyond generalized recruiting and advertising. Employers need to make clear on their job postings that positions are open to women. They need to use 'outreach recruiting' methods to contact women, by advertising at women's centres, community groups and in places where their 'target group' is to be found. Catalogues and pamphlets should mention any special services offered for women. These can include academic and personal counseling, or childcare and transportation services.

• Provide Programs for Women

Ninety-two percent of female survey respondents and 80% of male survey respondents in trades said that programs designed to bring more women into trades would be a good tool for increasing the numbers of women involved.

Both groups were asked what programs would be helpful. The following chart shows their responses.

Figure 22:



The fact remains that the more women there are working in trades, the better the trades experience will be for the women who come after them.

" If you're the first woman that breaks into it, the brave new frontier, you make it easier for the women who come after you."

" For me, working my job, I prove myself every day. So when I decide to do something else, and I move on to another job, then at least I have opened the door for the next woman who applies."

Studies indicate that women are more comfortable in work environments where they represent at least 30% of the population (Ferguson, 1995). Achieving this 'critical mass' is key.

" If I'd had a couple of women to work with, I probably would have felt a lot more comfortable."

The challenge for policy makers is to create programs and supports to enable these 'pioneer' women to move into trades, while at the same time avoiding setting up perceptions of 'special treatment' that will harm the women who come after.

• Improve and Add to Existing Training Programs

• Offer women-only training

> ***" We need basic programs to interest women. Teach them to use their hands."***

'Women in Trades and Technology,' or WITT courses, are special programs for women that have been successfully run at many colleges in Canada. Currently, variations on the WITT program are being taught at Aurora College and the British Columbia Institute of Technology, among others. WITT courses take career exploration a step further for women who are interested in trades occupations but don't know where to start looking. They focus on labour market trends and employment opportunities in trades and technology. Theory and practical expertise in a variety of trades and technical areas is combined with classroom components on developing occupational fitness and safe work practices. WITT courses often include tours of construction sites and industrial workplaces, and films and discussions with women who have entered these occupations and dealt effectively with any barriers encountered (Canadian Labour Force Development Board, 1991).

Marcia Braundy, an instructor of Women in Trades and Technology (WITT) courses, states that *" women-only programming must be available at the exploratory level to provide women with a supportive environment in which to try out new skills and take new risks. Our experience of difficult situations and changes in classroom environment as a result of admitting men to women-only programs has demonstrated that the option of women training with women must be maintained, at least until the dynamics of our socialization change and we have instructors in place who are committed to dealing effectively with mixed-gender technical classrooms"* (1994, p.52).

A study of women who graduated from WITT courses gave the following statistics. Of the 63% of women who were employed after taking a WITT course, 55% were in traditional jobs, and 45% were working in trades and technology. However, most credited the WITT course for motivation, instilling confidence, and facilitating career exploration, even though it may not have led directly to employment (Braundy, 1989).

> ***" They designed this program so that women could find out what trades they would like to get into. It's a good course. I didn't have that option, I just went straight into a trade, and when I got in I realized, this***

Special initiative programs like B.C.I.T.'s Trades Exploration for Women have been very effective in recruiting and training women and other designated equity groups in the skilled trades. At B.C.I.T., women's enrollment in pre-employment training has increased from less than 3% to almost 11%. Seventy-five percent of the women entering pre-employment trades training are graduates from special-initiative programs (St.Eloi, 1997).

• Offer training that meets the needs of women

It is clear that simply making trades training programs open to women is not sufficient to make such programs truly accessible to many women. Some women need support for tuition, transportation and child care. They also need programs that are responsive to the varying situations of students. Such

programs allow for support services and a range of scheduling choices (Hoddinott, 1998).

Women may also have different learning needs. Most Yukon men surveyed who work or teach in trades were aware of this. One said that women, *" Usually do better in theory and less well in practical. (Because they are) systematically excluded from pre-course experience."* Trades instructors need to adapt to variations in learning styles.

Research on the learning styles of women and men in trades courses indicates that most students do not learn primarily by physical (hands-on manipulation) or mental (lectures) methods, but by a series of relational methods, which are not as commonly used. *" Feelings set the conditions of learning (people who are feeling intimidated do not learn easily), relating-linking-connecting initiates the learning (linking new material to things already known increases the learning), verbalizing by the student stimulates the learning, hands-on application makes the learning complete, and feedback from the instructor sustains the student involvement"* (B.C. Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training, 1990, p.31).

Several women who participated in the focus groups also suggested that there should be more evening courses in trades, or courses with less commitment than a full pre-employment course.

" If they've got a weekend course in home wiring, why can't they offer a weekend on how to do simple things?"

" It needs funding. It's prohibitive to buy materials, hire an instructor, rent facilities. You can't do cost recovery on that kind of course. People can't afford it. We need a facility."

- **Make classrooms gender-sensitive**

One of the instructors who participated in the survey stated that a way to increase the numbers of women in trades training was to *" make women feel welcome and included in the courses."*

Existing training programs in schools and colleges can be improved through awareness or changes which make them more comfortable for students of both genders. While women who participated in the focus groups made it clear that they don't want 'special' treatment in trades classes or jobs, it is the responsibility of instructors and employers to make the work environment comfortable.

College and training programs can act as 'insulators' against negative hiring and employment practices by intensifying awareness and by planning strategies to combat them. Colleges can develop strategies that are focused on making entry for women into the workplace smoother, such as orientation or training in industry. Educational institutions can offer special services, such as mentoring, tours of workplaces, and supportive counseling, which make the transition from school to work easier for their female graduates. Trades faculty should be aware of the issues affecting the success of their female students: Where will they be working after graduation? How has the union reacted to female workers? What has been the record of major employers of our graduates regarding women employees? (Kirby, 1981).

• Improve and Add to Existing Government Programs

Until governments ensure that women have access to appropriate skills training for ongoing and emerging trades occupations, and equitable access to those jobs, women's opportunities for economic sustainability will be limited.

" I think the Yukon's a little slow on getting women into trades, other places are doing it, they're educating women to go into schools, and then they put them in a trades position, they have an employer to give them the job, after they're done the trades program. I think the Yukon's very slow on this part."

" There are very few men who would take a chance on hiring women. The government needs to take a stiffer back hand to the private institutions on human rights issues."

Access to the Yukon Apprenticeship Program is contingent upon finding a sponsoring employer and the achievement of a minimum academic standard (Yukon Apprenticeship Pamphlet, Government of Yukon Advanced Education, N.D.). While the academic prerequisites did not appear to be a problem for most women (only 8% of women surveyed needed educational upgrading before entrance to their trade), finding a sponsoring employer may be a major hurdle for women interested in undertaking apprenticeships. 19% of survey respondents who had enrolled or attempted to enroll in an apprenticeship program had difficulty finding a sponsoring employer. Currently, YTG's Apprenticeship training department does not keep lists of employers willing to take on an apprentice. Perhaps this is would be a good service. A list of employers willing to take on a female apprentice would be particularly helpful.

College or training programs can run in association with a sponsoring employer or industry who is willing to offer work opportunities for female graduates. In many cases, female graduates may need help with job placement, and partnerships with the private sector can help with this. Governments can offer employers incentives to undertake employer-based training for women, or 'bridging programs' (see workplace section). This would be particularly effective in sectors where there is a shortage of trained trades workers.

" No amount of government programs will make people equal. People make people [illegible] "

" I think it's an excellent program when they find a job for you after. A lot of times, you can do the training and then they'll still say 'oh, you're a girl' when you go to look for a job. If you've got the program or the government behind you, pushing for you, then I think that's someone to give you a chance, and it's important for government to make these kinds of positions, to give people chances. Give women chances."

Governments can also work in partnership with community groups or First Nations to offer training opportunities in communities or remote areas of the Yukon.

Women who participated in the Yukon women in trades focus groups and survey had very strong feelings about 'affirmative action' programs for women. Most

of them felt that such programs only made it more difficult for women to gain confidence and support of male employers and co-workers.

" I'm still angry that any ordinary person who wanted to take any training course and pay their own way had to conform to government quotas and programs."

" If you have this employment equity thing, you're automatically putting a woman on the spot, putting her into a room with a bunch of guys who are all going to want to get rid of her, it's really hard to do the camaraderie thing. You're at an instant disadvantage."

However, several of the women felt that these kinds of government programs could be useful.

" As far as affirmative action goes, I think it has its place, maybe not everywhere, and not for always, but for a certain period of time, it has a place. It shortens the period of change."

" What about, as an alternative to affirmative action, you encourage employers to hire women, maybe a payroll deduction or a subsidy."

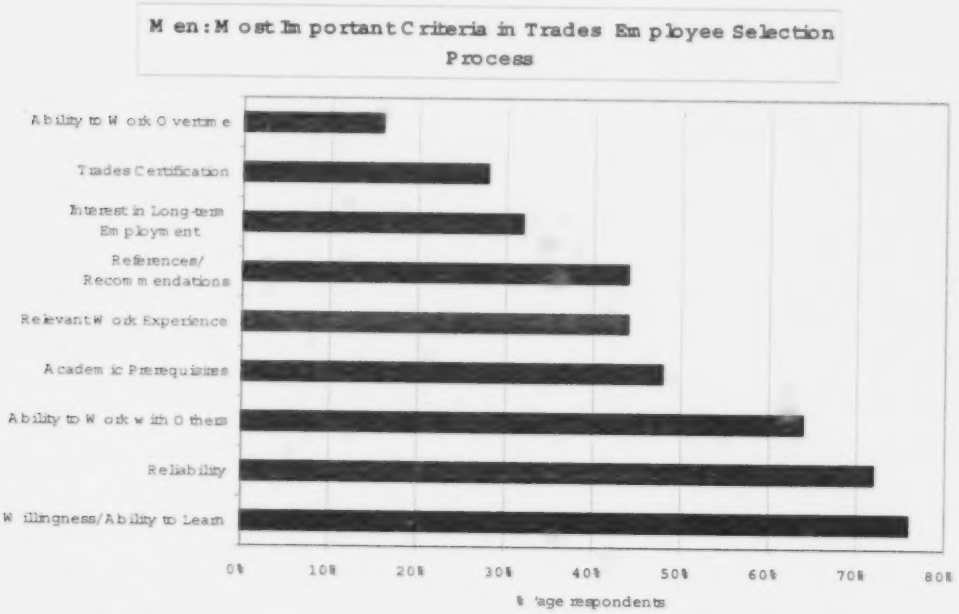
- **Make Changes to the Trades Workplace**

There are a variety of benefits available to employers or industry who increase the recruitment of women into their workplace. One benefit is access to the full labour market, and therefore a wider pool of workers from which to choose the best employees. Another benefit is an improved organizational climate, which utilizes women's new ideas and ways of doing work, and better consumer representation, as female customers and clients are more likely to be drawn to businesses where they see other women participating. Finally, focusing on gender equality in the workplace helps employers avoid human rights complaints and creates a better image of the company or business.

> ***" Education is not the problem - it's on the job itself: who you work with, do you have self-confidence in your abilities and***

A male tradesman who participated in the survey said the following: *" Nothing can be done to the actual work but the 'workplace' must change. Men must become more supportive, less judgmental, and more open to change."*

When asked what the most important criteria were for hiring trades employees, the men in trades surveyed answered the following.
Figure 23:



The top three choices, 'willingness to learn', 'reliability', and 'ability to work with others', are characteristics that are definitely not gender specific.

- **Consider 'Bridging Programs'**

'Bridging Programs' are programs that offer internal job opportunities to move women from stereotypical work to trades work within the same company. Bridging programs can also work to move women from home into the workplace. These programs focus on transferable skills that women already have. For example, the fine motor skills needed for typing and computer work are similar to the motor skills needed for welding (Ferguson, 1995).

- **Increase Workplace Supports for Women**

Women such as nurses have been doing shift-work for years, and have developed effective strategies for succeeding at this. However, many women have family and home demands that require as much commitment and planning as their work for pay. Work arrangements which include erratic hours, short notice of overtime, and little flexibility for workers can create systemic barriers to the participation of many women (Ferguson, 1995). *Multiple Voices, Multiple Roles*, a statistical profile of Yukon women, showed that women here have concerns and pressures relating to their commitments to work and family. They felt that supports such as workplace flexibility and on-site child care were needed (Government of the Yukon Women's Directorate and Bureau of Statistics, 1993). Other alternative work arrangements include flextime and job sharing.

" I think the fact that trades work is frequently contract work can turn women off, especially those with families who depend on regular money."

- **Ensure that Workplaces are Safe and Comfortable for Women**

Employers have a responsibility to their employees to provide a safe workplace. Having tools and equipment designed for women workers increases safety. Employers should also ensure that there are adequate washroom and shower facilities for women in the workplace. Other needed changes go beyond conventional notions of health and safety.

Workplace supports for women in trades should include a workplace 'code of conduct' and explicitly stated harassment policies.

" My main concern is that very few trades have sexual harassment policies or they are left unsaid. It's still a concern but I know how to take care of myself on the site."

Employers can help make the transition of women into the trades workplace easier by preparing existing workers for the arrival of women workers. Education and awareness training of male workers alleviates their concerns and aids in the acceptance of women in the workplace.

" Educate so that both employers and employees become open-minded."

Having support mechanisms built into the workplace lets women know they have somewhere to turn if they face problems, and can help retain women workers.

" I worked with lots of guys, some good and bad, but because I had a good foreman, it was okay for me. And I had no problem working with those guys. And if guys had an attitude, they kept it to themselves, because they knew it wouldn't be tolerated."

" I think what needs to happen out there is the executives need more training, or the company needs to take the initiative to make sure their bosses are better trained to talk to their employees, like have a monthly meeting and be able to freely air any problems you have. That's where they have to go."

Employers should study promotion patterns to see if women are equally promoted or offered training opportunities.

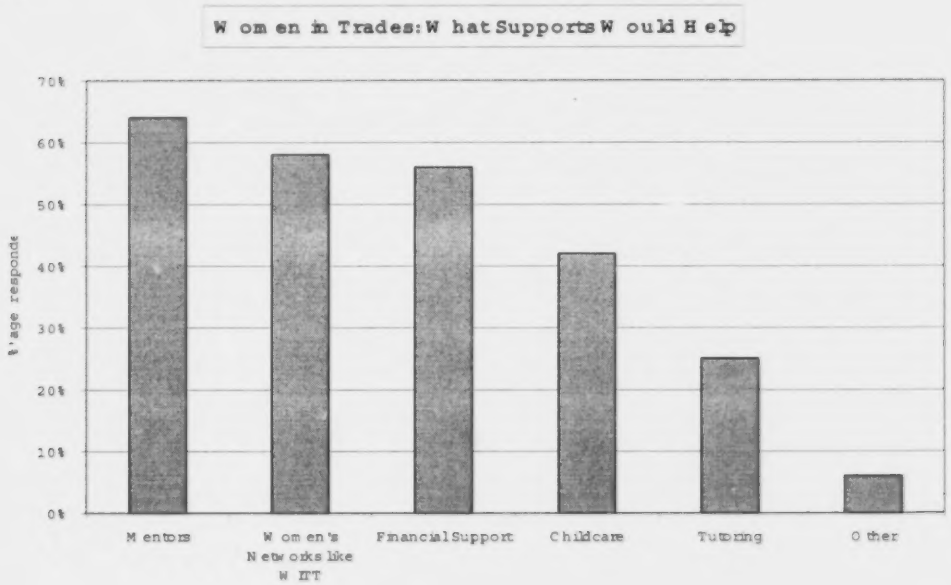
Employers who work to make the workplace environment comfortable for employees of both genders will enjoy benefits in the form of employee satisfaction and retention.

- **Provide Women with Mentors**

Isolation can be a problem for women in a predominantly male environment. Employers can counteract this problem by providing women with a job-site 'buddy' system, where new women employees are paired with another woman worker or an experienced worker on the job-site whose attitude towards women is positive.

• Provide Supports for Women in Trades

Yukon women in trades were asked what supports would help them in their work or studies. Their responses are summarized in the following table.
Figure 24:



Thirty-nine percent of women surveyed said that supports or lack of supports affect their ability to concentrate on their work or studies and their prospects for achieving their goals.

• Create Women's Networks

" I think we should get together more often. I think it's a good idea, a 'women in trades' thing. I mean, the professionals have it. To share ideas, jobs, referrals."

The Yukon is the only territory or province in Canada that does not have a Women in Trades and Technology (WITT) group. WITT is a national and local education and advocacy organization that is dedicated to promoting and assisting in the recruitment, training, and retention of women in trades, technology, operations, and blue collar work. The government could facilitate the creation of a WITT group in the Yukon by sponsoring Yukon trades women to attend national WITT conferences, or in inviting a WITT spokesperson to the Yukon to help local women organize.

" We need to reinforce each other, encourage each other. Even years later, you still need to hear that you're doing a good job. There could be a mentor thing, a trades group for women."

" Something that would be excellent would be a mentorship program, where women who've already got several years experience would advise, be there to give suggestions. Because, you know, half the jobs you get in the Yukon are

because of who you know. And it's the encouragement thing. If you could get together and talk with another woman who had a couple years experience, they could advise you. I think that would keep women in the field."

- **Increase Financial Support for Women in Trades**

The availability of financial aid for trades training can provide crucial support to women who may not otherwise take the risk of exploring a non-traditional career. In other jurisdictions, special trades training programs have been offered as a service to women on social assistance, as a way of helping them achieve economic independence. Such a program could be linked to current social assistance 'Life Skills' programming.

" They're not sponsoring the trades like they used to, that was a great benefit when I went."

" I tell you, when I went, I don't know if I would have done it, if U.I. hadn't sponsored the program."

" Financial support while training. Daycare facilities. Here, right now, you can't even take your kid to daycare for that many hours in a day. They don't provide that service."

" I think Human Resources sponsorship for training, in my case was one of the reasons I felt I could afford to 'take the risk' of going into trades. I think this program should definitely be resumed."

Situation of Young Women in High School Trades Classes

Focus Groups were held at two high schools in Whitehorse and two schools in communities outside of Whitehorse - Dawson and Faro. Six to twelve young women attended each of the focus groups. A total of thirty-four young women participated in the focus group discussions. In most cases, these were grade 8 to grade 12 students registered in some kind of 'Shop' or 'Tech Ed' class. (Trades classes offered by high schools go by several different names: Shop, Industrial Ed, Tech Ed, Woodworking, Metalworking, Mechanics, etc.) At one school, the group consisted of both female students who had chosen Shop, and those who had instead chosen to enroll in Home Economics.

Across the Yukon there were very few young women currently registered in trades classes in the higher grades. At most schools, grade 7 or grade 8 girls were required to take both Home Economics and some type of Tech Ed course. However, by the time these young women are in grade 11 or grade 12, the number who continue to register in shop courses has dropped dramatically.

The young women at the focus groups gave some reasons why this was so. They felt many girls just weren't interested.

" I wouldn't ever become a carpenter. Your hands get dirty, and you stink, and you bash yourself with hammers." - Grade 8 girl taking Home Economics

They also felt that girls often weren't encouraged by parents, teachers, and peers.

" Last year, the boys were a pain. They thought all the girls were so dumb and everything. None of the girls stuck with it. We had five girls in it last year, they never came back. It was my goal to come back to mechanics this year because they were like 'you can't do it,' and I wanted to come back and prove them all wrong."

" My mom wouldn't let me go in shop. Because she doesn't think the teacher watches enough."

" My dad, when I told him that I was changing the carburator on his skidoo, he was like 'are you getting help from the guys?' but I can do it myself. He hasn't figured that out yet."

The poor image of trades was often pointed out by trades men and women as being a deterrent to young people, both boys and girls. Trades are often seen as 'second-choice' careers, for those who can't make good grades. Many parents push academics on their schoolchildren, believing the path to a good career starts with a university education. The research of Dr. John Walsh shows that while 70 percent of students state they expect to go to university, four out of five high school students do not actually end up attending university. Students in Walsh's study were not aware of possibilities for career success in the skilled trades because of the education system's focus on the transition from school to post-secondary education rather than the transition from school to work (Walsh, 1993).

When asked why older girls don't take shop, one Grade 8 student replied, *" Well, they have a choice of shop or home economics or French, so they usually take French. You need a second language to get into college."*

Young women in shop are challenging the poor image of trades.

" Some girls last year, they thought it was for low-class people who don't want high intelligence and applied skills, they were thinking that mechanics was a slack-off course, and all you do is get dirty, and it's a bunch of bums in the class. But it's a challenge."

" There's a bit of math stuff, and book stuff. I actually like doing the bookwork now, because I'm learning so much out of it. It's not a class I like to miss. I find that if I want to sleep in one day, I don't if I have mechanics, because I learn so much, every mechanics class."

Trades may have a poor image with both boys and girls, but girls also face other societal pressures.

" I was at the doctor's a while ago, and he asked me what I like to do, and I mentioned a bunch of things, and I mentioned mechanics, and he was like " You're a grease monkey?" and I was like, " Excuse me?" and he was like " You want to be working in grease all day long?" and I was like " You want to be checking on people

" It's so untraditional. 'Girls should be in Home Ec and guys should be in shop.'"

" I think most girls don't join it because they feel it's degrading to women or something. I asked certain girls 'are you coming in mechanics this year?' and they're like 'no, that's so dirty.' They think it's a man's thing."

The young women who came to the focus groups in high schools had practical reasons for enrolling in shop classes.

" I took it because I think it's a good thing to know, how to work on engines and stuff, so if you're driving down the highway and you break down, you know what to do, you're not stranded."

" I'm in it because I don't want to pay a mechanic every time I have a problem with my bike."

Many of the young women who did choose to take shop classes had family role models. These were mostly men, fathers, uncles, and family friends who worked in trades.

" With me it's been a whole family tradition, my whole family's into motorbikes and engines and stuff, and always stressing 'it's a good thing to know.'"

" I've always been interested in woodworking stuff because my uncle does that for a living, and I fooled around on his machines. So I just decided to go into shop and try it

These young women received a lot of support from their families:

" My parents think it's the greatest thing that I do this. I just bought a car, and the engine doesn't work in it, so they're like 'ooh, it's perfect, I'm so happy you're in mechanics.' They just think it's really good. They don't want me to be totally incompetent. I had never changed a tire before, and in my opinion, I'd be happy to pass, but even if I don't, I know I've learned stuff, that I'm sure will be valuable in the future."

The classroom environment varied with the different schools visited. Girls were aware of the benefits of having keen, sensitive teachers in shop classes. Some felt encouraged and supported by their shop teachers. Others felt marginalized or ignored in the classroom, or even unwanted. Occasionally the environment was just not suited to their learning needs.

" I had to wait three days for help once. He gives you a deadline and you never reach it because you don't get any help. He's too busy disciplining the boys."

" This year, at first I heard there were no other girls in mechanics, and then I found out there were three others in it. And I just want to make it easier on them if they've got any questions. I find that even when I go to the shop teacher and I want to ask him a question he's usually busy with something else, so I really want to help out the other girls, to keep them in it, because I know it's really hard getting information in the class, when everyone's working on everything else, and they don't have time for anyone else. There's not too many of the guys that are willing to offer much advice or share their ideas on stuff."

Recommendations for Increasing the Participation of Young Women in Trades

- **Combat Systemic Exclusion**

Many trades instructors and shop teachers expressed concern that young women are systemically excluded from 'hands-on' knowledge of the materials and machines around them as they grow up. Unlike little boys, traditionally girls may not be encouraged to work with tools and machinery, or build things and take things apart. One male carpenter and contractor put it succinctly: *" I have 4 daughters and I wish the world was a more 'fair place.' Generally (but not always) women haven't had the 'hands on,' 'get dirty, get it done,' upbringing that men have had. Thankfully, this is changing."*

A young woman in a woodworking class also raised this point:

" My dad is a mechanic, and he also built our house, so I learned a lot when I was growing up, just by watching and asking questions, so I knew more when I went in. Maybe other people don't have a dad and they don't know."

Young women are aware of the stereotypes they face. While they feel things are easier for them than for women in previous generations, they can see the effects of sexism in the world around them.

" I think a lot of the reasons why women don't do it, is because people think they can't. I pump gas, and when men come up they look at me like 'you shouldn't be doing this, you're a girl' and they'll do it themselves. I'll

just stand there and watch them. They won't even ask me to do something as simple as check their oil because I might mess up. Because I'm a girl, and I know it's because I'm a girl because guys the same age as me work there, and they can do it all."

Social or gender equity committees in Yukon schools are working to increase gender equity in the classroom, by making resources accessible to teachers and encouraging them to work on equity issues. Making resources and resource people available to schools, particularly in the communities, is an important issue (Roma Dobrowlsky, Social Equity Committee, St.Elias Community School, Personal Communication). The Innovators in the Schools Program offers 'Career Fairs' which can include women and men in non-traditional careers. 'Career Panels' offered by schools should include men and women working in the skilled trades.

Career and Personal Planning (CAPP) courses are another good venue for introducing trades career films or speakers to young women. CAPP courses include career exploration and planning, and a required experiential credit is part of the course. CAPP teachers should be aware, however, when facilitating students' self-exploration, that female students may have false perceptions of their own interest and abilities in trades. The high school Co-op Education program and Yukon Secondary School Apprenticeship Program offers another opportunity for high school students to explore careers in the skilled trades. However, young women's interest in exploring trades careers must be piqued at a younger age to encourage them to take advantage of this program. Employers may need incentives to encourage them to take on female trades apprentices at the high school level.

- **Expand Career Role Models**

Young women need role models in a wide variety of areas if they are to be encouraged to keep their career options open. If girls do not see women in their schools, communities and households taking on a variety of roles, they will be less likely to consider taking on non-traditional roles themselves.

" All the people we see doing those jobs, plumber and stuff, are men. They should have a woman doing those jobs."

" I think parents and teachers are important. Like if there were more girl shop teachers. Like here there's not one shop teacher that's a female."

" If there was a female shop teacher in one of the schools, probably a lot of girls would try it out. That would change a lot."

Many young women mentioned that having a female shop teacher in the school would encourage more girls to explore trades courses.

" Most people assume that women have a lot of brains, they assume that about most girls. I don't know why they don't think that they can have brains in other areas, like mechanics. I mean, assembling things, taking things apart, it's not that complicated, once you get used to it."

" I think the more women that get into it, the more acceptable it's going to be. Like with gym teachers, before there was a stereotype 'women don't do sports' that's all there is to it, and now there's women gym teachers, and girls are treated the same as guys in gym class, at least ones that I've been in, and girls do sports and they do good at sports, and

it's just a matter of time and more girls standing up and saying 'I want to do this, who cares if people say I can't.' And the stereotype changed, and people's lives changed, and I think the same thing could happen with shop, if a lot of girls that wanted to decided, 'yeah, I want to do this, I want to be a mechanic, I want to be a carpenter,' eventually people would have to accept that. Because if a girl comes to fix your car and you can't do it, and there's nobody else to do it, you have to let her. Eventually people are going to accept it."

The B.C.I.T. Technology Teacher Education program has conducted a task force on gender equity and is attempting to recruit and support women interested in training to be high school technology teachers (B.C.I.T. Task Force on Gender Equity in Technology Teacher Education, 1997).

• Girls-only Trades Classes

Some high-school teachers and college instructors suggested that women and men may have different learning styles. One shop instructor felt that girls were pushed aside by boys in his classes. When faced with a machine or project girls would tend to take more time orienting themselves and thinking about what they were going to do, while the boys would push them aside and begin fiddling with it, even though this often led to rash mistakes. This was the experience of many girls in shop classes.

" It seems like some of the guys, when you ask them a question about something, instead of showing you how to do it, they do it for you. And then you don't learn anything."

It is often suggested that girls-only classes in areas where girls have faced systemic exclusion allows them to become comfortable and confident with their 'hands on' and 'machine or tool' skills in a safe and positive learning environment.

Girls in the focus groups expressed mixed feelings about the concept of exclusionary classes.

" That class would get picked on so much, people would say 'that class is the dummy class.' It would show that we can't do it with other people, be equal, we'd be singled out."

" If you want to go into a job in that field, you are going to have to work your whole life with people of different sexes, different backgrounds, so why teach people in school something totally opposite? We need to work together. School is supposed to get us ready for life. Having all-girl classes is not a practical life thing."

However, some girls saw the benefits of learning new skills in an all-girl setting.

" I think it would be a good thing to have a class for girls, initially it would be good, and then stick them in with the guys, I'm sure they would do better, just to kind of get them grounded in a class with girls."

The idea that many girls just aren't interested in trades was raised throughout the research by both women and men in the surveys and focus groups. However, the fact that 'you just don't know what you don't know' may

be true in this case. Many young women are not raised to consider activities or careers in non-traditional areas. They see few female role models, and little advertising that might widen their horizons. They may not receive encouragement from school guidance counselors who may not be aware or open to trades alternatives. Research has shown that young women's beliefs about their abilities in non-traditional fields are often based on artificial perceptions rather than reality (McKenna and Ferrero, 1991).

" Unfortunately, before now, I was absolutely uninterested in everything my dad ever did. He spends so much time out in the garage, and I was totally unaware. I didn't ever think about going out and offering him my help, because I figured I'd just get in the way."

• Offer Programs for Young Women

There are programs offered outside of or in partnership with schools that offer girls a chance to try a new trades experience, increase their comfort levels in areas they may not have been previously familiar with, and change their perceptions of disinterest or inadequacy.

The Youth Exploring Trades and Technology (YETT) program, run by the Yukon Department of Education, is one such initiative. Six week-long camps are run each summer, where participants build and test their own go-carts. This project was piloted in 1994, as a joint initiative of the Yukon Department of Education and the Women's Directorate, as Girls Exploring Trades and Technology (GETT). It was a chance for girls to overcome the barrier of exclusion from trades experience. A YETT instructor explained:

" It's the fear, they look at something and go 'I can't do that, it's sharp, it's scary.' And it's getting them through that initial stage, breaking down the fear. The boys have had it since they were two. And it's language - that's the other thing that women are afraid of. It's language between men and women, and we do communicate differently."

However there was so much interest in the participation of boys that the following year the project was broadened to include both boys and girls. This may have watered down the goal of singling out girls for special training. At the very least, it means that with only three out of six camps per summer, girls get half the time and space to participate. It was, however, felt important to keep the boys and girls classes separate, for fear of negative class dynamics and that " the boys would take over" (Ann Birnie, Employment Programs Officer, Y.T.G., Personal Communication). It has also remained important that the majority of the trades instructors and coordinators of the YETT program are women. This provides both boys and girls with positive female role models.

" Some of them just need a little time, some of them just need a little babysitting, a little 'you can do it' kind of encouragement. And there's all the dynamics that go on in the class. Between the boys and girls class there's quite a difference. It's night and day. We let in a group of boys, and it was so much easier! They're way more self-confident. But they didn't do nearly as good a job. There's something that's really interesting. The girls took way more time in finishing, and painting. They have way more patience. So in the end they did a better job."

The YETT program is a very popular one, and the available spaces are taken well in advance.

> ***" Get them young, I think that's part of socializing them. Elementary, even day care, I think that's a time when they see the role models, they see women can do this, not just***

Other summer programs called GETT camps have been run successfully in other parts of the country, including Saskatchewan and Manitoba. These camps, for girls in grade 7 and 8, teach young women the impact of studying science and keeping trades careers an option. Girls who rule out such careers at an early age can end up without the science and math prerequisites they need later on.

Construction Technology for Women (CTW) is a project that was undertaken by Women in Trades and Technology National Network (WITT NN), with funding from Human Resources Development Canada's (HRDC) Youth Internship Program.

The goal of the CTW project was to promote construction technology as a viable career path for young women in Canada. Young women in grades 10, 11 and 12 were provided high school courses in construction technology and summer internships. The project was piloted in eight sites across the country, including Yellowknife, N.W.T. This project was highly successful, according to an independent evaluation. Of the students who participated 96% reported that they would recommend CTW to other young women, and 95% of employers indicated that CTW should be used as a model for other industry-focused initiatives aimed at encouraging young women to consider careers in their industry (SPR Associates Inc., 1998).

Projects like CTW help young women decide on future education and career paths, give them more self-confidence, and provide them with skills. Through their participation in this course, young women are exposed to positive images of women in trades and female role models. Phase two of this project is called " WITT Works" and has more of a community and industry focus. WITT is interested in creating partnerships with women and the mining industry in the North.

Conclusion

The results obtained by the researcher through the Yukon women in trades surveys and focus groups show that women are an active and vital part of this territory's trades community. However, currently they only make up a small percentage of those in trades programs or jobs. Women working in trades found satisfaction in their wages, work conditions and opportunities.

Commonly expressed frustrations included the need for women to continually prove themselves capable of doing their jobs and the lack of education for and about women in trades. While many of the women who participated in the survey had faced barriers related to their gender, most were able to overcome these barriers. They had many recommendations which, if implemented, will help increase the number and success of future female trades workers.

Suggestion for Further Research

One of the Yukon women who completed the women in trades survey made a comment that reveals an area that needs to be further explored.

" Maybe instead of trying to have more women in trades, the jobs that women traditionally do should be better paid."

Perhaps existing apprenticeship programs could be expanded to include lower paid 'women's work.' New mechanisms need to be developed to provide recognition and accreditation to women who have learning acquired outside formal educational institutions.

There is an attempt currently being made to increase 'certification' programs for the tourism and service industries. Similarly, new programs are being offered to provide certification for those working in early childhood development and health care fields. These programs work to increase standards and allow employers more information about the qualifications of their employees. They are also intended to increase workers' security and occupational mobility in the labour market. Further, it is the hope that such programs will help make traditional female occupations more attractive to young women. However, whether they will also increase the wage standard for these employment sectors is not yet known.

Programs such as these must be 'sold' to employers and industries who may have concerns about obtaining a more skilled workforce but not wish to pay higher wages to such employees. Conversely, women who are working at professional levels of employment may risk losing a share of their jobs to lower-paid workers certified at the apprenticeship level. This situation could apply, for example, to the distinction between nurses and nursing assistants (Delhi, 1993).

More research is needed in the area of incorporating apprenticeship training models and apprenticeship regulations as a way of improving the working conditions, wages, and opportunities of women in low-paid, little-recognized employment.

References Cited

B.C.I.T. Task Force on Gender Equity in Technology Teacher Education (1997). Final Report.

Braundy, M. (1994). Building Foundations for Technical Training: WITT Standards and Guidelines.
Women's Education 10 (3/4). Toronto: Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women, 50-53.

Braundy, M. and Schom-Moffat, P. (1989). What Happened to the WITT Grads?
Women's Education 7 (3) Toronto: Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women, 10-14.

British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training (1990). Orientation to Trades
And Technology: A Curriculum Guide and Resource Book with Special Emphasis on the
Needs of Women.

Canadian Labour Force Development Board National Apprenticeship Committee (1994). Expansion of the Apprenticeship Training System: A Working Paper for Discussion.

Canadian Labour Force Development Board (1991). Towards A Women's Agenda on Training:
A Resource Kit.

Dehli, K. (1993). Apprenticeship Training Models for " Women's Work" : The Norwegian Experience. Women's Education 10 (2) Toronto: Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women, 17-21.

Ferguson, M. (1995). Welcoming Women into Trades, Technology, Operations and Blue Collar
Work: A Checklist of Strategies. London, Ontario: WITT National Network.

Getting Started in Yukon Apprenticeship (N.D.). Yukon Department of Education, Advanced Education Branch.

Government of the Yukon Women's Directorate (1999). Counting Us In: A Statistical Profile of Yukon Women.

Government of the Yukon Women's Directorate and Bureau of Statistics (1993). Multiple Roles, Multiple Voices: A Survey of Yukon Women: Their Concerns, Their Priorities.

Green, C.K., and Stitt-Gohdes, W.L. (1997). Factors That Influence Women's Choices to Work in the Trades. Journal of Career Development, 23(4), 265-278.

Hoddinott, S. (1998). Something to Think About - Please Think About This: Report on a National Study of Access to Adult Basic Education Programs and Services in Canada. Ottawa: Ottawa Board of Education.

Howell, R.S. and Schwartz, H. (1988). Community-Based Training for Reentry Women in Nontraditional Occupations. In L.H. Lewis (Ed.) New Directions for Continuing Education 39, 65-78.

It's Your Future (N.D.). Yukon Department of Education, Advanced Education Branch.

Kirby, E.B. (1981). Petticoats to Jackhammers: Strategies for Women in Occupational Education. In J.S. Eaton (Ed.) New Directions for Community Colleges 34, 43-53.

McKenna, A.E., and Ferrero, G.W. (1991). Ninth-Grade Students' Attitudes Toward Nontraditional Occupations. The Career Development Quarterly, 40, 168-181.

Randall, N.D. (1993). The Back to School Survival Guide for Women. Vancouver: The Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women, B.C. Network.

SPR Associates (1998). Evaluation of the Construction Technology for Women Sectoral Youth Internship Project: Final Report. Toronto: SPR Associates.

Scott, K. (1995). The Recruitment Guide: How to Recruit Women into Trades, Technology, Operations and Blue-Collar Work and Training. London, Ontario: WITT National Network.

Statistics Canada (May 12, 1998). 1996 Census: Sources of Income, Earnings and Total Income, and Family Income. The Daily.

Statistics Canada (April 14, 1998). 1996 Census: Nation Tables: Education. The Daily.

Statistics Canada (March 17, 1998). 1996 Census: Nation Tables: Occupation, Industry, and Class of Worker. The Daily.

Statistics Canada (March 17, 1998). 1996 Census: Labour Force Activity, Occupation and Industry, Place of Work, Mode of Transportation to Work, Unpaid Work. The Daily.

St.Eloi, A. (1997). Breaking the Barriers: Equity Update, B.C.I.T. Committee on Equity.

Walsh, John. " Focus on the Future: Skilled Trades and Career Selection Research Project." Community Futures/ Business Development Centre Conference. Coast Bastion Hotel, Nanaimo. 13-16 September, 1993.

References Consulted

Avebury Research and Consulting Ltd. (1986). Marketing Non-Traditional Jobs to Girls and Women. Women's Education Fall 1986. Toronto: Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women, 20-24.

Braid, K. (1989). Building the Future: Profiles of Canadian Women in Trades. Women's Bureau, Labour Canada.

Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women (N.D.). You Make the Choice: Yukon Women in Science, Trades and Technology.

Cherry, F. (1985). Women's Experience in Trades and Technology. Women's Employment Directorate, Employment and Immigration Canada.

Clarke, J. (Ed.) (1991). Girls in Science: Discovering Their Choices. Women's Education 9 (1). Toronto: Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women.

Ethington, C.A., Smart, J.C., and Pascarella, E.T. (1988). Influences on Women's Entry into Male-Dominated Occupations. Higher Education 17, 545-562.

Federal -Provincial-Territorial Joint Working Group of Status of Women and Labour Market Officials on Education and Training (1994). Rethinking Training: Meeting Women's Needs.

Kane, S. (1993). Trades Mentor Network Helps At-Risk Apprentices. Tradeswomen 12(4).

Lutra Associates Ltd. (1990). Women in Trades: A Needs Assessment.

Nemiroff, G.H. (1987). Women's Training Programs: A Feminist's View. Women's Education 5(3). Toronto: Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women, 28-32.

Read, B.K. (1994). Motivational Factors in Technical College Women's Selection of Nontraditional Careers. Journal of Career Development 20 (3), 239-258.

Rea-Poteat, M.B. and Martin, P.F. (1991). Taking Your Place: A Summer Program to Encourage Non-traditional Career Choices for Adolescent Girls. The Career Development Quarterly (40), 182-188.

Rubenfeld, M.I. and Gilroy, F.D. (1991). Relationship Between College Women's Occupational Interests and a Single-Sex Environment. The Career Development Quarterly (40), 64-70.

Russell, C. (1989). Breaking With Tradition: Women in Blue Collar Work. Women's Education 7(3). Toronto: Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women, 15-17.

Ward, E. and McKee, E. (1984). Yukon Women: Non-Traditional Occupations. Yukon: Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women.

Whiston, S.C. (1993). Self-Efficacy of Women in Traditional and Nontraditional Occupations: Differences in Working with People and Things. Journal of Career Development 19 (3), 175-186.

Yukon Government Women's Directorate and Department of Education (1995). A Capella North: A Survey of Teenage Girls in the Yukon.

Yukon Government, Human Resources Development Canada, and Yukon Chamber of Commerce (1997). Yukon Work Futures: A Guide to Work Opportunities.

Appendix A

Yukon Women in Trades Survey

Yukon Women in Trades Survey

The Northern Research Institute is doing a study on Yukon women in trades. This study was jointly commissioned by the Advanced Education Branch, Yukon Department of Education and the Yukon Women's Directorate. The purpose of the study is to find out the situation of women in trades in the Yukon, find out why the numbers of women in trades programs and jobs are low, and make recommendations for improving the representation of women in these areas. I assure you that if you participate in this survey, your identity will be kept completely confidential.

Take your time and think about answers to open-ended questions. Point form answers are fine. Use the back of the page if you need more room. When answer categories are provided, feel free to use the 'other: please specify' category if the others do not speak for you.

THE FIRST QUESTIONS ARE ABOUT HOW YOU GOT STARTED IN TRADES.

1. **What are the main reasons you chose to enter a program or career in the trades?**
Please Explain. _____

_____

_____

_____

2. **How did you first find out about opportunities in trades?**

- ☐ **Advertising/media**
- ☐ **School counselor, teacher**
- ☐ **Friends and peers**
- ☐ **Family**
- ☐ **At work**

☐ **Other**: *Please Specify.* _____

3. **What or who influenced your decision to pursue trades?** *Check all that apply.*

- ☐ **Teachers/Counselors**
- ☐ **Friends/Peers**
- ☐ **Family**
- ☐ **Income Needs**
- ☐ **Employer/Co-worker**
- ☐ **Advertising/Media**

☐ **Other:** *Please Specify.* _____

4. **Did you need to take further schooling to meet educational requirements before entry into your program or trade?**

☐ **Yes**
☐ **No**

4a. **If yes, in what areas did you need further schooling?**

☐ **Math**
☐ **General education**
☐ **Other** – *Please Specify.* _____

THE NEXT FEW QUESTIONS ARE ABOUT YOUR OPINIONS ON THE INITIAL PROCESS OF ENTERING A TRADE

5. **Women make up only about 9% of workers and students in trades in the Yukon. Why do you believe many women don't pursue careers in the trades?** *Please Explain.*

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. **Do you feel that women *considering* education or careers in the trades face barriers that men do not?**

☐ **Yes**
☐ **No**

6a. **If yes, what do you feel are the greatest barriers facing women who are considering applying or getting into the trades?** *Please check three or less.*

☐ **Recruitment and hiring process**
☐ **Barriers in job interviews**
☐ **Physical barriers**
☐ **Cultural/ social barriers**
☐ **Family barriers**
☐ **Safety barriers**
☐ **Lack of encouragement**
☐ **Lack of role models**
☐ **Discrimination**

☐ **Other:** *Please Specify.* _____

7. **Did you experience any barriers to *entering* trades that your male counterparts did not?**

☐ **Yes**
☐ **No**

7a. **If yes, what were they?** *Please explain.*

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. **Consider the recruitment and promotion efforts of each of the following. Are they sufficient to attract women to trades?**

Business / Industry ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**	**Colleges** ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**
Unions ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**	**Unions** ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**
Schools ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**	

9. **Think about the way businesses and industry hire trades workers. Do you think that the way most trade employees are recruited and hired is a barrier to women?**

☐ **Yes**
☐ **No**

9a. **If yes, how?** *Please explain.* _____

_____

_____

10. **Do you think programs designed to bring more women into trades would be a good tool for increasing the numbers of women working in these areas?**

☐ **Yes**
☐ **No**

10a. **If yes, what kinds of programs would be helpful?** *Check all that apply.*

☐ **Affirmative action quotas**
☐ **Government incentives to hire women**
☐ **Women-only training**
☐ **Employment equity policies**
☐ **More advertising / role models**
☐ **Supports to encourage women to apply**
☐ **Other** _____

11. **How do you think your program / trade could be changed to make it more attractive to women who are considering a trades career?** *Please Explain.*

_____

_____

_____

_____

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES WORKING IN OR STUDYING A TRADE

12. **Are you still working in or studying a trade?**

☐ **Yes**
☐ **No**

12a. **If you are not in trades now, what made you leave the trades?**

☐ **Personal or family reasons**

☐ **Difficulty finding work**

☐ **Looking for new challenge**

☐ **Didn't enjoy it**

☐ **Other:** *Please Explain.* _____

12b. **If you are doing something different, do you feel your training or experience in trades was beneficial?**

☐ **Yes**
☐ **No**

12c. **If yes, why?** *Please Explain.* _____

_____

_____

13. **Have stereotypes about women affected your participation in the trades?**

☐ **Yes**
☐ **No**

13a. **If yes, how?** *Please Explain.* _____

_____

_____

_____

14. **Do you feel that men in your program / trade are uncomfortable with the presence of women coworkers / students?**

☐ **Yes**
☐ **No**

14a. **If yes, in what way are they uncomfortable?** *Please Explain.*

_____

_____

_____

15. Think about concerns you may have had when initially considering a career or training in a trade. Have those concerns changed as you move through the program / continue to work in trades? *Please Explain.*

_____

_____

_____

_____

16. **Did you worry about personal fitness or strength when considering working in or studying a trade?**

☐ **Yes**
☐ **No**

16a. **If yes, did your fitness or strength turn out to be a problem in performing your work?**

☐ **Yes**
☐ **No**

17. **Do you think the physical work environment – facilities, equipment – provided by your program or employer is appropriate to women?**

☐ **Yes**
☐ **No**

18. **If not, how is it lacking?** *Please Explain.* _____

_____

_____

_____

19. **Were the following other aspects of trades programs and jobs appropriate to women?**

		19a. **If no, how is it not appropriate?**
Learning materials / Manuals	☐Yes	☐No
Teacher / Staff Resources	☐Yes	☐No
Student or Employee Services	☐Yes	☐No
Work Atmosphere	☐Yes	☐No
Role Modeling	☐Yes	☐No
School Atmosphere	☐Yes	☐No
Safety Equipment	☐Yes	☐No

20. **In your experience, what is the attitude of employers toward hiring female trades workers?**

Please Explain. _____

_____

_____

21. **Does your participation in a trade program or job affect your ability to meet your other responsibilities at home?**

☐ **Yes**
☐ **No**

21a. **If yes, how?** *Please Explain.* _____

_____

22. **What do you feel are the main benefits of working in the trades?** *Please Explain.*

_____

_____

_____

23. **What are the main drawbacks of working in or studying a trade?** *Please Explain.*

_____

_____

_____

24. **How do you feel about your career choice?**

☐ **Dissatisfied**
☐ **Satisfied**
☐ **Very Satisfied**

25. **From your experience working in or studying a non-traditional job, would you say the benefits outweigh the negative aspects?**

- ☐ **Yes**
- ☐ **No**
- ☐ **N/A**

26. **Do you feel the situation of women working in or studying trades is different in the Yukon than in other parts of Canada?**

- ☐ **Yes**
- ☐ **No**
- ☐ **Don't Know**

26a. **If yes, how is it different?** *Please Explain.* _____

_____

_____

27. **How do you think your program / trade could be changed to make it more manageable for women?** *Please Explain.* _____

_____

_____

THE NEXT FEW QUESTIONS ARE ABOUT SUPPORTS

28. **During your studies, or during your work, did you receive support from any of the following sources? Supports can include help, encouragement, or financial aid.**

Check all that apply.	**What kind of support?**
☐ **Social assistance/Public income support**	
☐ **Teachers / Instructors**	
☐ **Counselors**	
☐ **Family**	
☐ **Other Students**	
☐ **Friends**	
☐ **Co - workers**	

29. **What kinds of supports do you feel would be helpful during your studies/apprenticeship/performance of your job?** *Check all that apply.*

- ☐ **Mentors**
- ☐ **Women's networks like *Women in Trades and Technology***
- ☐ **Financial support**
- ☐ **Childcare**
- ☐ **Tutoring**
- ☐ **Other – Please explain** _____

30. **Do supports or lack of supports affect your ability to concentrate on your studies / work and your prospects for achieving your goals?**

☐ **Yes**
☐ **No**

TO HELP ME BETTER ANALYSE YOUR ANSWERS, PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING GENERAL QUESTIONS.

31. **What is your age?**

☐ **16-25**
☐ **26-35**
☐ **36-45**
☐ **46-55**
☐ **56-65**
☐ **Over 65**

32. **How old were you when you started working in or studying a trade?**

_____

33. **What is your ethnic background?**

_____

34. **How long have you lived in the Yukon?**

☐ **<1 year**
☐ **1-5 years**
☐ **6-10 years**
☐ **>10 years**

35. **What trade are you working in or studying?**

_____

36. **What specific trades training and certification do you have?** *Check all that apply.*

☐ **Pre-employment course**
☐ **Apprenticeship training**
☐ **Journeyperson certification**
☐ **Other** – *Please Explain.* _____

36a. **If you were enrolled or attempted to enroll in an apprenticeship program, did you have difficulty in finding a sponsor/employer?**

☐ **Yes**
☐ **No**

37. **What other education do you have?**

- ☐ **<Grade 12**
- ☐ **High school diploma**
- ☐ **Some college**
- ☐ **College diploma or certificate**
- ☐ **Some university**
- ☐ **University degree**

38. **How long have you been working or studying (did you work) in a trades occupation?**

- ☐ **<1 year**
- ☐ **1-5 years**
- ☐ **More than 6 years**

39. **While working in trades, have you worked in (check all that apply):**

a) ☐ **the private sector**
b) ☐ **the public sector**
c) ☐ **your own business?**

40. **Are you a member of a union?**

- ☐ **Yes**
- ☐ **No**

41. **Do you have children living at home?**

- ☐ **Yes**
- ☐ **No**

42. **Since joining the work force, what other kinds of work have you done?**

_____

_____

DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS?_____

_____

_____

_____

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!

Appendix B

Yukon Women in Trades Survey - 'Men's Survey': Instructors, Employers, Industry and Union

Yukon Women in Trades Survey

The Northern Research Institute is doing a study on Yukon women in trades. The study was jointly commissioned by the Advanced Education Branch, Yukon Department of Education and the Yukon Women's Directorate. The purpose of this study is to find out the situation of women in trades in the Yukon, find out why the numbers of women in trades programs and jobs are low, and make recommendations for improving the representation of women in these areas. I assure you that if you participate in this survey, your identity will be kept completely confidential.

Your Occupation _____

Your Place of Employment _____

1. **Have you worked or are you currently working with or teaching trades women?**

- ☐ **Yes**
- ☐ **No**

1a. **If yes, in what capacity?** *Please explain*

- ☐ **Instructor** _____
- ☐ **Employer** _____
- ☐ **Apprenticeship Supervisor** _____
- ☐ **Other** – *Please Explain* _____

2. **Do you feel that women are present in adequate numbers in non-traditional trade occupations/programs in the Yukon?**

- ☐ **Yes**
- ☐ **No**
- ☐ **Other** – *Please Explain* _____

_____

3. **Have you noticed any changes or trends in the numbers of women participating in your program/trade?**

- ☐ **Yes**
- ☐ **No**

3a. *Please explain.*

_____

_____

_____

_____

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE ABOUT RECRUITMENT AND THE HIRING PROCESS. THEY CONCERN WOMEN WHO ARE NOT CURRENTLY IN TRADES PROGRAMS / CAREERS.

4. Why do you believe many women don't consider trades as a career option?

_____

_____

_____

5. **Do you feel that women considering education or careers in trades in the Yukon face barriers that men do not?**

☐ **Yes**
☐ **No**

5a. **If yes, what do you feel are the greatest barriers facing women who are considering applying or getting into trades programs or jobs?**
Please check no more than three boxes.

☐ **Recruitment and hiring process**
☐ **Barriers in job interviews**
☐ **Physical barriers**
☐ **Cultural / social barriers**
☐ **Family barriers**
☐ **Safety barriers**
☐ **Lack of encouragement**
☐ **Lack of role models**
☐ **Discrimination**

☐ **Other** – *Please Explain* _____

6. Do you think there are any safety, health or physical considerations that might prevent women from pursuing trades occupations?

☐ **Yes**
☐ **No**

6a. **If yes,** *please explain.* _____

_____

7. Do you think there are any cultural or social considerations that might prevent women from pursuing trades occupations?

☐ **Yes**
☐ **No**

7a. **If yes,** *please explain.* _____

_____

8. **Do you think there are any family considerations that might prevent women from pursuing trades occupations?**

☐ **Yes**
☐ **No**

8a. If yes, *Please Explain.* _____

_____

9. **Do you think that trades occupations are advertised and promoted well enough to attract women?**

☐ **Yes**
☐ **No**

10. **Are you aware of any promotional activities related to increasing the participation of women in your program / trade?**

☐ **Yes**
☐ **No**

10a. **If yes,** *please explain.* _____

_____

_____

11. **Do you think programs designed to bring more women into trades would be helpful to your business or organization?**

☐ **Yes**
☐ **No**

11a. **If yes, what kinds of programs would be helpful?** *Check all that apply.*

☐ **Employment equity policies**
☐ **Affirmative action quotas**
☐ **Government incentives to hire women**
☐ **Women-only training**
☐ **Supports to encourage women to apply**
☐ **More advertising / role models**

☐ **Other-** *Please Explain.*

_____

_____

12. **When hiring trades employees, or selecting students for your program, what are the most important criteria used in the selection process?** *Check all that apply.*

☐ **Relevant work experience**
☐ **Willingness to learn/ Ability to learn new things**
☐ **Ability to work overtime**
☐ **Interest in long-term employment**
☐ **Ability to work with others**
☐ **Reliability**
☐ **Trades Certification**
☐ **Academic prerequisites**
☐ **References / recommendations**

☐ **Other**– *Please Explain.* _____

_____

13. **How does your business or organization recruit trades employees/students?**
Please check all that apply.

☐ **Word of Mouth**
☐ **Union**
☐ **Canada Employment Centre**
☐ **Applications on file**
☐ **Does not recruit**

☐ **Other** – *Please Explain.* _____

_____

14. **Do you think that the way most trade employees are recruited and hired is a barrier to involving more women in trades?**

☐ **Yes**
☐ **No**

14a. **If yes, how?** *Please Explain.* _____

_____

_____

NOW I WILL ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SITUATION OF WOMEN CURRENTLY IN TRADES PROGRAMS OR CAREERS.

15. **Do you find the classroom/work environment is affected by the presence of women?**

- ☐ **Yes**
- ☐ **No**

15a. **If yes, in what way?** *Please Explain.* _____

_____

_____

16. **Are men in your program/trade uncomfortable with the presence of women co-workers/students?**

- ☐ **Yes**
- ☐ **No**

16a. **If yes, in what way are they uncomfortable?** *Check all that apply.*

☐ **Feel that they will have to carry some of the woman's workload**
☐ **Feel that the woman is taking jobs from men**
☐ **Feel that their wives/partners won't like them working with a woman**
☐ **Feel that they must behave and speak differently**
☐ **Feel that women get special treatment / unfair advantages**

☐ Other – *Please explain.* _____

_____

17. **Do you think the physical work environment – facilities, equipment– that you provide is appropriate to female trades people?**

- ☐ **Yes**
- ☐ **No**

17a. **If no, in what way is it not appropriate?** *Please Explain.* _____

_____

_____

18. **What are some of the unique problems/concerns you see women facing in your program/ industry?** *Please Explain.*

_____

_____

_____

19. **What are some of the unique skills or abilities you feel women can bring to your program/industry?** *Please Explain.*

_____

_____

_____

_____

20. **Do you think women working in or studying trades in the Yukon face barriers that their male counterparts don't?**

☐ **Yes**
☐ **No**

20a. **If yes, what are the barriers?** *Please Explain.* _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

21. **How do you think your program/trade could be changed to make it more attractive or manageable for women?** *Please Explain.* _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

22 **What assumptions do you think women make about trades and non-traditional work that turn out to be correct?**. *Please Explain.* _____

_____

_____

_____

23. **What assumptions do you think women make about trades and non-traditional work that turn out to be wrong?** *Please Explain.*

_____

_____

_____

24. **What assumptions do you think men in your program/ trade make about women's participation in trades and non-traditional work that turn out to be correct?** *Please Explain.*

_____
_____
_____
_____

25. **What assumptions do you think men in your program/ trade make about women's participation in trades and non-traditional work that turn out to be wrong?** *Please Explain.*

_____
_____
_____
_____

DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS? _____
_____
_____

Thank you for participating!